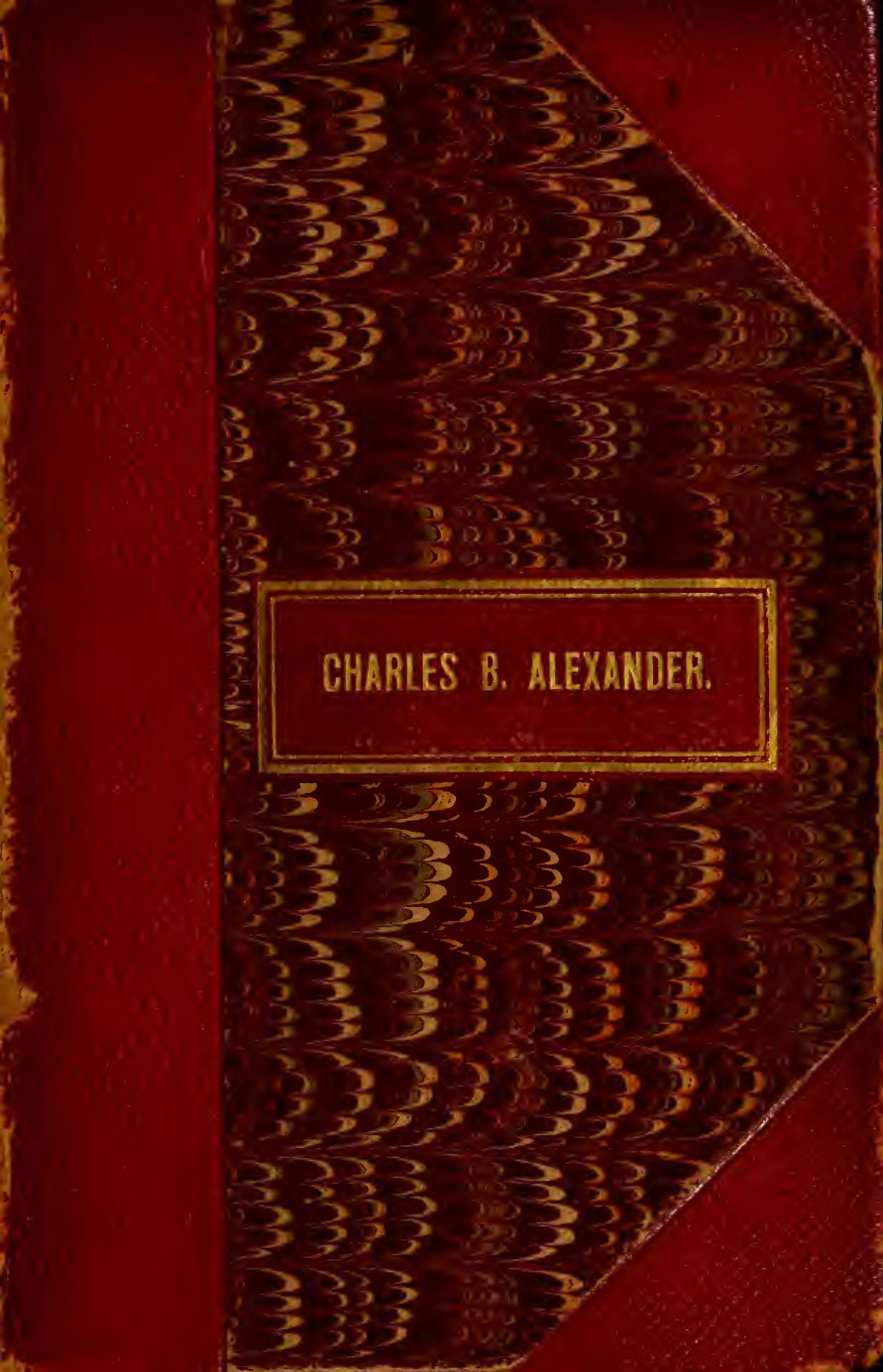




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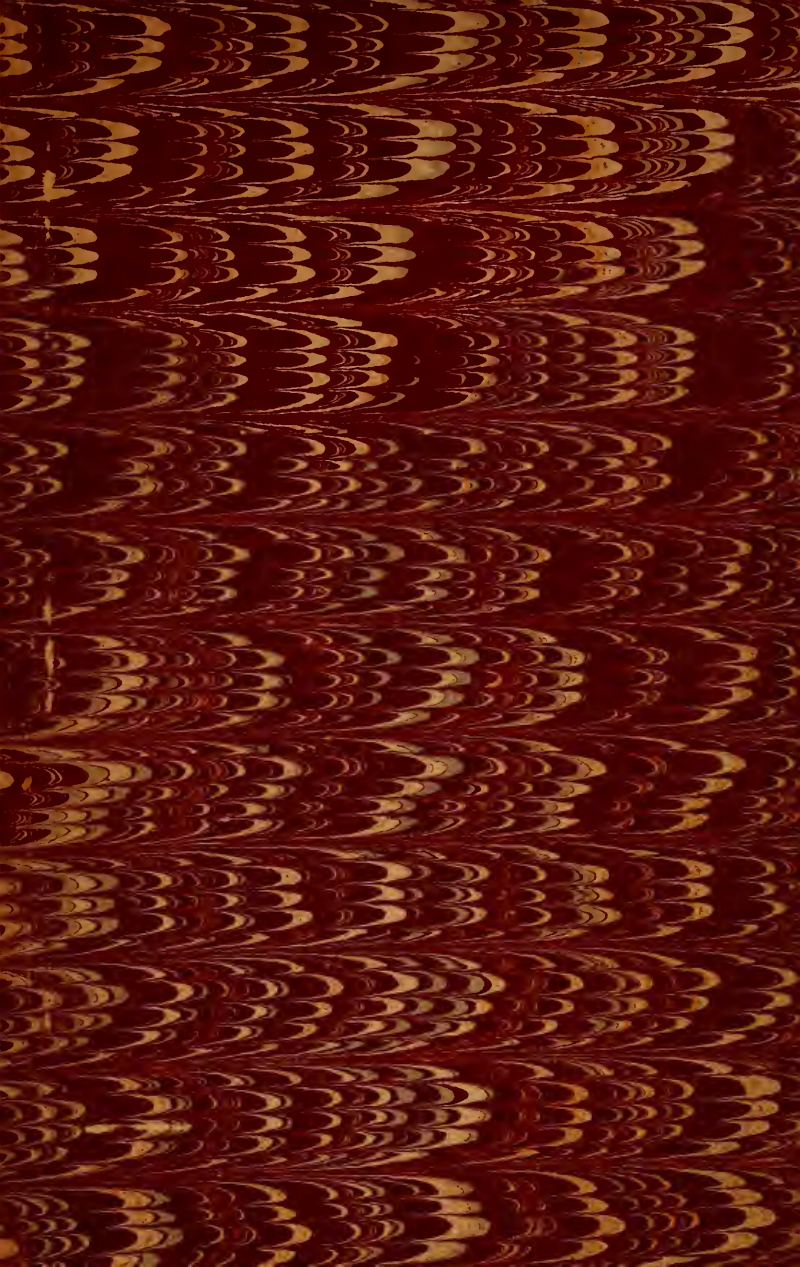


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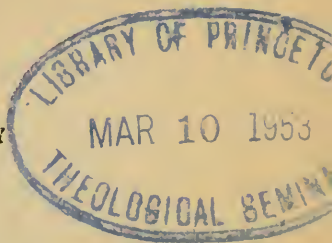




THE HAPPY GROUP.

LETTERS

TO A VERY



YOUNG LADY.

James Waddell Alexander

WRITTEN FOR THE AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION, AND
REVISED BY THE COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION.



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P R E F A C E.

THE writer of the following pages has endeavoured to make a book which should be both entertaining and useful to the young. It has been his aim to adapt his language to the wants of children, without becoming childish. For this reason there has been little attempt to come down to the style of the nursery; in the belief that, if children do not understand sound English, it is time they should learn it. If every hard word is avoided, none but easy words can ever be learned.

The subject and manner, in some letters, are purposely higher than in others; for it is impossible to suit all capacities.

It is hoped that none will find any difficulty which it will not be profitable to overcome.

The religious instructions contained in many parts of the book are earnestly commended to the youthful reader, with a hearty prayer that they may lead some of Christ's lambs into the way of life.

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LETTERS

TO A

VERY YOUNG LADY.

LETTER FIRST.

INTRODUCTORY.

MY DEAR MARY,—You have now arrived at an age when you are fully able to understand the advice of your friends, on the most important subjects. You write letters to your little acquaintances, and receive their answers. This is a great source of entertainment to young ladies of your age, and at the same time it may be made very improving. I do not say that it often is so; for the things which fill such notes and billets are sometimes very childish. But the correspondence need not be childish,

even when it is childlike; for there is a difference between these words, which I will leave you to find out.

Since you are so fond of letters, I do not see any reason, my dear, why you should not have a new correspondent. I think I hear you say, *Who can it be?* Where is this new correspondent to come from? I will tell you. It shall be none of your school-mates, nor any one of your relations. But it shall be a friend who loves you and enjoys your company. True he has lived many years longer than you, and has gray hairs and a good many wrinkles. But notwithstanding this, he is not so old, nor so cross, nor so sour, that he cannot love the sweet ways of pleasant children. Ah! you have guessed it! It is I myself, who am going to be your correspondent; and I mean to write you a long string of letters; that is, what we call a *series*. And all I have to ask is, that you would care -

fully read them ; and when you have done this, that you would put them away safely, for future use. Because there may be some things which you will understand and enjoy better a few years hence, if your life be spared, than you do now.

Do not think, my dear child, because I am so much older than you, and because I am a minister of the gospel, and because I have a grave and serious face, that I shall always write to you in a way to make you sad. There are some things which I must say, that may indeed sadden you, for your good ; but I hope to write some things, also, which shall not only instruct, but entertain and amuse you. I believe, I may say without vanity, that I have in my treasury many pleasant things for a young lady of your age. Some of these will be from my travels, some from my daily walks, some from my books, and some from the Book of

Books, the Inspired Volume, which is the message of God our Creator and Saviour.

This is enough for an introduction. My letters will be numerous, but they will not be long. Sometimes, I hope, you will try your pen in the way of reply. And let me assure you, my dear Mary, in spite of my wrinkles and gray hairs, I shall prize your little communications very much.

LETTER SECOND.

PLAY.

MY DEAR MARY,—To be fond of play is so natural at your age, that no one would ever think of finding fault with it. Providence has made it natural to all young creatures to sport and gambol. You see this in the lamb, the kid, the kitten, and the domestic fowls. It is wisely and mercifully arranged, to ensure that exercise which is necessary for the growth of the body, and the opening and strengthening of the limbs. Besides, much that we call play is really learning. There are many things which we need to know, that are taught in no schools, except the school of play. But then, you know, 't is not right to be always at play, any more than it is right to be always

at school. Every thing is beautiful in its season. The sparrow that sings so sweetly near our window, must sometimes be busy about her nest. Very little children do scarcely any thing but play. Very old men and women do not play at all. And while little people are growing up, the older they become, the less play they need. So that though I will allow you to spend a good deal of your time in amusing yourself, you must always remember, that it is not your main business, and that you must willingly leave play for work, or books.

Perhaps you are ready to ask me, what are the best plays for a little girl? I answer, play is play, and that is best which you like best, provided it is innocent, healthful and moderate. It would be very unwise in me to set you a task of play. You would soon grow weary of your doll, your tea-things, your graces, or your

cup-and-ball, if you were commanded to play with them an hour every day.

Be sure, my dear child, to have no amusements which are unknown to your dear parents, or which are not pleasing to them. No play ought to seem right to you which seems wrong to them.

Plays in the open air are the best of all. Exercise, out of doors, is good for the health. Look at those children who are kept very much within the house. How pale they are! If you feel their arms, you will find them soft and weak. Little girls who go to school, and sit there several hours over their books, need, in a special manner, the open air, to give a colour to their cheeks, and to prepare them for after life. When the weather is very bad, your parents will direct you to stay within; but if they are wise, they will not allow you to be too much afraid of a little sunshine or rain, or even

of a gentle snow You are to live in a rough world, and it will not do for you to become too tender.

Your young acquaintances will be much better advisers than I, as to what sports and games you shall play at. There is no danger that you will not have enough. Avoid those which are boisterous and romping, and those which give pain to your companions, or to any living creature. Be gentle, modest, and fair, even when in sport. Keep far away from all plays, in which you have to speak any thing untrue, even in jest. If your sports can be made of any use, or fit you for any duty, so much the better. I do not care how full of gayety and ioy you are, while you are at your play. It is well to do what we do with all our heart. But never play when you ought to be studying or working. Say to yourself: When I work, I work, and when I play, I play. Especially, do not play in

school, unless by express permission; and remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy.

Now, my dear, lest all this lecture about play should turn out to be hard work, I will weary you no longer. You may go out to your tulips and roses, or to your skipping rope, or to your swing, or to ride on your pony, or to run along the river's bank, or to arrange your tea-table. So I bid you good evening.

LETTER THIRD.

THE BOOK-CASE.

MY DEAR MARY,—I have been thinking of giving you a little advice about your book-case “My book-case!” you are ready to cry out—“why, sir, I have no book-case.” Then, my dear, it is time you had one. “O,” you will say, “you have book-cases, and my father has a book-case, and lawyers and scholars have book-cases; but what should I, a little girl not yet in my teens, do with one? I will answer you, Mary. As soon as you have books of your own, you should have a place to keep them by themselves. If you have two or three only, a shelf will do in your mother’s chamber, or in the nursery, or in your own room. If you have a

dozen or more, as most girls of your age have, who are careful of what has been given them, you will need several shelves, and these put together make a book-case. The carpenter will make you a plain one for a few shillings; or, if your parents can afford it, and will buy you one of a more elegant sort, the money will not be thrown away.

But whether you have a book-case or not, you cannot begin too early to keep every thing that belongs to you in good order. *A place for every thing, and every thing in its place.* When you have been reading a book and are suddenly called away, do not leave it on a chair, or in the window-seat, or on the door-steps, or the bench in the arbour. Do not lay it open on the breakfast-table or work-stand, with the clean leaves spread out to be soiled. Return it carefully to the shelf, and to its exact place; not upside down, nor

with the back inwards, but just as you would wish to find it. In work, or study, or play, the rule is a good one for all people: *Leave things as you would find them.*

By no means use your book for any purpose but to read in it. For this it was made: and to do otherwise is to abuse it. When I call upon the young ladies of my flock, I see many signs of abused books. Some of them wet their finger or thumb to turn over the leaf, a slovenly habit which no neat person will indulge in. It soils the page, and makes what you call dog's-ears. I have turned over many thousands of leaves in my day, but I never found this expedient necessary. Some persons think a book a very safe and good place for keeping flowers, cut-paper, patterns of silk and ribands, and delicate bits of lace; and so it is, if the book is never to be read. But the sight of these things between

the leaves is a fair sign that the owner is not a great reader. Some young ladies use a book to raise them at the piano-forte, or they set a flower-pot upon it, or they take it to support the sash of a window, when the weight is out of order. Pray avoid all these tricks. They are most common where people are vulgar and ignorant. A book is made to be read; use it aright and it will be a treasure. After a little while it will be no trouble to you to put your book away, whenever you have done reading in it.

It is a good way to put a neat paper-cover on such books as you have to use very often. It is not a good way to turn down a leaf in order to mark the place, or to stick a pin into the paper; you had better lose your place than do either of these things.

Never allow yourself to write any thing in a book except your name,

and write that but once. You will of course be ashamed to draw pictures on the pages, or to tear out the blank leaves at the beginning or end. It is the slattern only who falls into such practices; and I should judge of the neatness of a young lady very much by the care she takes of her books.

This will be enough about the outside of books. I may say something about the inside hereafter.

LETTER FOURTH.

FILIAL DUTY.

MY DEAR MARY,—Your kind parents are still living It is an unspeakable blessing, for which you cannot be thankful enough to Almighty God. Think of the thousands of poor orphans in the world, and pray to be kept from forgetting the debt of gratitude that you owe.

When you see the care of your beloved mother for your little sister or brother, who is still in infancy, you should daily remember that the same care was once bestowed on you. You cannot remember it, but it is fresh in the minds of your parents; and if you were to live a hundred years with them, you never could repay them. O how they watched by your bed-side when

you were sick ! How they trembled when they thought you would die ! Can you love them enough for this ? How are you going to repay them, Mary ? With money ? O, no ! all the gold of all the mines in the world would not repay them. They do not ask gold and silver, and you have not got any, if they did. What then are you to pay them with ? What ought you to give them ? I will tell you, in a single word, *Honour* : this is what you are to render, and this is what God commands.

HONOUR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER, THAT THY DAYS MAY BE LONG UPON THE LAND WHICH THE LORD THY GOD GIVETH THEE.

This is the fifth commandment, but it is the first commandment *with promise*.* It is the child's great commandment, and the one which should be always in your mind and heart. It promises long life and

* Eph. vi. 2, 3.

prosperity as far as these are for God's glory and your good. Remember it, then, and honour those beloved friends, who love you more than it is possible for you *now* to understand.

If other persons are placed over you in a situation like that of your father and mother, they have like authority. You must honour them also. I mean your guardians, your teachers, and all who take the place of parents to you.

Bless God for giving you kind and able parents, and ask yourself every day, what you can do to make them happy. Watch their very looks, and do not wait for their command, but hasten to obey before they have given you their orders. It will be too late to think of this when their precious heads are laid under the earth. Then, my dear Mary, (if you should be living,) you will think of a thousand things

which you might have done for their comfort; but it will be too late.

Never differ with your mother a single moment, about what you ought to do. She knows better than you. If you think otherwise, you are a foolish, as well as a wicked child. It is impossible for you to please God, unless you please your parents in every thing lawful which they command you.

Obey from the heart cheerfully, quickly and affectionately. Do not be like the eye-servant, who works only while the master is looking at him. Attend to your parents' wishes as much in their absence as in their presence. It is ungrateful, it is offensive to God, for any child to do otherwise.

To say that a little girl is disobedient to her parents is one of the worst things it is possible to say about her. There are such girls in

the world. I have met with them. I have heard them speak as pertly to their mothers as they would to a servant; and I have been disgusted and shocked, and have trembled for them. Such a young lady shall never be, with my leave, the companion of my children. She is hateful to God and holy angels, and unless she repent and turn, will no doubt fall under heavy judgments. I hope better things of you, my child. You cannot repeat too often the words of Scripture: Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honour thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. Ephes. vi. 1, 2, 3.

LETTER FIFTH.

EARLY RISING.

MY DEAR MARY,—It is now the beautiful summer-season, when our kind Creator has given us the greatest delights of nature. It is the time of flowers, and fruits, and birds, and beautiful prospects. But to enjoy these fully, you must rise betimes. Young persons sometimes get into a very bad habit of lying in bed for some hours after the sun is up. They are asleep when creation is showing its wonderful beauties. They lose many pleasures which they might enjoy for nothing; and they are forming a habit which is likely to remain with them as long as they live.

Make one fair trial of early rising, and you will be persuaded that I

am right. Go out with me just before sunrise. The moment you go abroad, what a freshness and fragrance breathes from the country around! What a concert of gay birds in the wood! What brilliant colours in the various flowers! Now tell me, is not this far better than to be lying, stupidly asleep, in a warm bed?

Early rising is good for the health. Most old people will tell you that they have been early risers. If you wish to have an appetite for your breakfast, go out in season and brush away the early dew. A little exercise in these morning hours is better than a great deal at a later hour in the day.

Those who lie long in bed are apt to neglect their dress. As they rise but a little before the family come together, they have to dress in a hurry; and so they fall into careless, slovenly ways. What is still

worse, they often neglect their lessons. In the evening, when tired with play, they put off their tasks till morning; and when the morning comes they sleep so long that they have just time to hurry down to breakfast. And what is worst of all, they are almost sure to neglect their devotions. They have no time to read their Bible, as every one ought to do every morning; and if they pray, it is in a hasty, careless manner, which is unprofitable to them, and displeasing to God. So you see there are serious evils growing out of late rising.

It is a false kindness in your friends to let you sleep too long in the morning, and when you grow older you will not thank them for it. It would be a real favour if they were to force you to arise at an early hour, day after day, until the habit was fully formed and fixed for life.

Begin at once. Every thing must

have a beginning. It will be a little hard at first, but it will be less and less so every day. Spring out of bed the moment you open your eyes. Never lie an instant after you awake and find it day. This will soon make it necessary for you to retire early, and you will not wake too early more than once or twice.

I hope to find you among the early birds, and to see by your cheeks and your activity, that my rules have done you good.

LETTER SIXTH.

PRAYER.

MY DEAR MARY,—There is an age at which every child, whose parents respect religion, is accustomed to pray to God. All little boys and girls are taught to do so, unless they have been brought up in a very heathenish manner. You can remember the time when your dear mother used to make you kneel down by her, and repeat the simple petitions which she taught you. I hope you will never forget those infant devotions. While your little hands were clasped in prayer, no doubt the heart of your tender parent accompanied your supplications with her own.

But children often cease to pray. Alas! that it should be so. They become ashamed of prayer. They

would feel badly, if they thought any one knew they had gone into their closet to pray. How dreadful, that as we grow older we should grow worse! What a sign of the corruption of our nature! I trust it is not so yet with my dear young friend; I trust she never fails to pray to God, and that she loves to do so.

It is not enough, my dear, to go by yourself and say over a prayer, however excellent the prayer may be. God looks at the heart. Praying is asking. When you do not ask, you do not pray. If you do not desire what you ask, you do not pray aright. Such prayers are mockery of God, like those of the Pharisees, which our Lord Jesus Christ condemned. Take care not to offer such prayers.

The very best hour of the day should be given to prayer; that is, with most people, the early morning hour. Then, when all nature is

sweet and inviting, when the air is fresh, when birds are singing, when you are refreshed by a night's rest, and before the cares of the day have come upon you, go and pour out your heart before God. It is the best way of beginning the day. Whatever you do afterwards, you will be likely to do better if you have prayed for God's blessing.

Let me beg you not to neglect this precious privilege as you grow older. No matter where you may be, or in what company, remember your duty to God. I hope you will never be thrown into the neighbourhood of those who are wicked enough to laugh at you for offering your prayers to God. But even if this should be the case, no matter. It is better to please God than to please men. They laughed at prophets, and apostles, and martyrs, yes, and at Jesus Christ himself.

Do not hurry over your prayers

as if you longed to get through them. Remember, prayer is speaking to God. Think of what you say while you pray, or else your prayers will be a mere chattering, senseless noise, which a parrot might make as well as you.

If you have a room or closet where you can be entirely alone, go there to pray. You know our Saviour's direction, Matt. vi. 6. In summer-time you may go to an arbour, a garden, or a grove. If no such place is convenient, do not think you are excused from praying. Kneel down in the most retired part of the house you can find, and there converse with your Father who is in heaven.

Do the same thing at night, and never think of going prayerless to bed. The beasts do so; but the heathen do not so; nor do the Mohammedans. Let not a young Christian be worse than Turks and heathens.

LETTER SEVENTH.

FAMILY WORSHIP.

MY DEAR MARY,—There are some families which never come together to worship God. They rise in the morning and go to bed at night just like the brutes that perish, without one word of prayer, or one word of praise. If they have the precious Bible in their houses, they never read it aloud. I say there are such families in the world; but you, my dear, have not been among them. It has been your lot to be born of pious parents. As far back as you can remember, you have met every morning and every evening for the worship of God. In this way you have heard the Scriptures read over a number of times. This is a favour for which you will have

reason to thank God as long as you live. All your books and all your schools are as nothing when compared with this family-school, this school of God, where a whole household gather daily at the feet of Christ, and learn of Him.

You ought to think very highly of family worship. You ought never to be absent from it. To lie in bed, or to be only half-dressed, when the signal is given for prayer, is a sin and a shame. Be up in time, so as to be fully ready to come in promptly and take your place, with your book in your hand.

Remember that you are in the presence of God. You have come to hear his holy word, and to pray to him. Be sober. Let no light thoughts come into your mind; or, if they come in, dismiss them. Do not look about at the other children; do not smile nor laugh. Attend seriously to what is going on. Mind

what is read out of the word of God. It is a dreadful habit which some people get into, of hearing the Scriptures read without knowing what they have heard.

If the family sing at their daily worship, I hope you will sing too. It is a delightful exercise; and it is a good way of learning to sing. I hope my Mary will never be one of those young ladies who can sing at play, sing at the piano-forte, sing everywhere but in the worship of God. There is nothing you can do with your voice better than to praise God with it.

Especially be on your guard when you kneel in prayer. It is a solemn moment; but it is one which careless children profane very much. You are now going to converse with God. Be in earnest. Let not your eyes wander; and, if possible, let not your thoughts wander. Every word of the prayer is spoken to God.

and spoken to God for you ; therefore lose no word. Proper attention to family worship is as likely to end in your conversion, as any means of grace you can use.

In the evening you will no doubt be more weary and drowsy than in the morning. But you must try to keep awake. These things depend very much on habit ; and habit may be formed by strong resolution. Make up your mind not to fall asleep during any religious service.

Never think the worship of God a hardship. Never allow yourself to feel as if family worship were an unwelcome interruption. Go quickly to the place of prayer. Go joyfully. Go as you would go to meet your dearest friend. Go as if you loved it. Learn to love it. Lay down your plaything or your book with cheerful expectation. To praise or pray is better than play and playthings.

Now, my dear young friend, if you find that you have done wrong in any of these things, do so no more. Humbly pray to God, for Christ's sake, to forgive this sin; and beg him for his grace, to make you better.

LETTER EIGHTH.

BEHAVIOUR AT TABLE.

MY DEAR MARY,—The dog and the cat do not take regular meals. The beasts of the field devour what they can get, wherever they find it. The birds eat a hundred times a day. Savages are said to take their food a good deal in the same way, sitting, standing, lying, or running. Sometimes they go a whole day without food, and sometimes they swallow as much as would last us several days. But civilized people eat at particular times, and here, in America, we commonly do so three times in the day.

It is not merely for the sake of eating and drinking that we meet at the table. It is to see one another, and to help one another, and to enjoy

one another's company. We meet as friends, as relations and as reasonable beings. Every thing at our meals should be quiet, and pleasant, and cheerful.

When a little infant is first brought to the table, its behaviour is very odd. It feels strangely and awkwardly. It does not know how to handle a knife and fork, to use a spoon, to feed itself, or to keep itself clean. It is sometimes noisy and unruly, and as soon as it has done eating, it is impatient to be gone. You have observed this in your little brothers and sisters.

Now what I mean to say is this; that the conduct which is pardonable in a baby, would be very offensive in a young lady. Yet I have seen girls who behaved as ill at table as the most ignorant child: yet they were called young ladies. I have known them to spill their tea and coffee, scatter their food about,

stuff their mouths with food, and snatch what was upon the dishes I have heard them cry and scream so as to disturb all around them; and I have seen them eat greedily, and then rush from the table before the rest of the company were done. Forgive me for mentioning these rude ways. I am persuaded you would be ashamed to be charged with any of them. And I do not give you the advice which follows because I think you need every word of it, but because you may follow bad examples so as to require some of it.

Always appear neat and fully dressed at the table. Be there at the moment. Take your own place, and occupy as little room as possible. Show a devout attention when the blessing of God is asked, as it is by all faithful heads of families. Wait till you are helped, and do not ask for any thing which is not at the table.

Speak kindly to those who wait upon you; and give as little trouble as possible.

By all means avoid all haste in taking your food: it looks like greediness, and is a mark of ill-breeding. Take notice of those who are most refined in their manners, and do as they do, avoiding all airs and affectation. Always remember that you are a young lady, and avoid every thing bold and boisterous. Speak when you are spoken to; but as a general rule, be silent at table. When you have ended your meal, do not jump up with your mouth full, but sit quietly till all the rest arise. Or, if it is necessary for you to retire for the sake of study or work, ask leave to do so.

When you go abroad to visit your friends, they will judge of you very much by your behaviour at the table; and if they find you rude and ill-mannered, they will think il-

of your parents. Indeed, children should remember that all who see them behaving themselves amiss, will think worse of their parents on this account. For the sake, then, of those whom you love so much, let your whole conduct be proper and respectful.

Let me say one word more about your meals. As you so often pray, GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD, you should think of this prayer when your daily bread is given you; that is, when you sit down at table. You should think who it is that feeds you, and be thankful. And you should remember the needy who are perishing by thousands, while you have enough and to spare

LETTER NINTH.

SCHOOL.

MY DEAR MARY,—When it is time for school, be sure to be ready. Think of it a little beforehand, so as not to be hurried. Let your person be neat and tidy in the highest degree, but without finery. If the season requires it, have your thick shoes and umbrella, or your parasol and fan in readiness. Let there be no searching for books and papers at the last moment.

Go direct to school, and be so punctual that every one who knows you may say, “There is Mary, who is never too late”

Pious teachers open their school with prayer and the reading of the Holy Scriptures. Be serious and devout during these exercises. Let

no smile, or light look, or whisper, say that you treat the worship of God with disrespect.

Salute your teachers and school-mates with respect and cheerfulness, and take your place silently. Get to work immediately. As long as you live, make it a rule to give your whole mind to what you are about. You go to school in order to learn not to talk or play ; therefore never talk or play there, except at times when you are permitted to do so.

If you love learning, you will get learning. In our country, girls are sent to school only a few years ; therefore make the most of your time. Study hard, my dear child, and it will be a treasure to you as long as you live. Do not go by the example of those around you. In most cases this will be wrong. Do what you know to be right, what your teachers direct, and what will please your parents. Study for the

sake of getting knowledge, rather than for any medals, tickets, prizes, holidays, or other rewards. Next to virtue and religion, knowledge is the best thing. It requires labour, but it is worth labouring for. Your dear parents may lose all their property, and you may become poor; but this will not rob you of your learning. All the men on earth cannot rob you of it. Think of this every time you go to school, every time you open a book.

Let your teachers see that it is a delight to you to please them. Nothing makes a teacher happier than to see scholars dutiful. Never, even for a moment, join in any plans to vex your instructors. It is foolish, it is unbecoming to your sex, and it is wicked.

Treat your companions with kindness and civility. Take care to fall into no rough, boyish ways of talking and acting with them. If you

do, you will be in danger of becoming that hateful thing, a hoyden. Rude salutations, pinches, nicknames, and horse-play may win a laugh, but they are not lady-like; and wise and well-bred persons are disgusted with them. They are the things which sometimes make boarding-schools highly offensive. I am sure you will despise them.

Try to perform every duty perfectly. Do your best. If it is reading, read as well as you think possible. If it is writing, let it be neat, careful, and without a blot. If it is repeating from memory, never miss a word. If it is arithmetic, give all your thoughts to it closely, and be sure you are right. Do nothing hastily or carelessly. It is better to work well than to work fast. You know how it is in work. You may knit so fast as to drop your stitches; you may sew so fast that you must

rip it all out. *What is well done, is twice done.*

When the school is dismissed, go straight home, unless otherwise directed by your parents or teachers. If you have tasks, do not put them off too long. Doing so leads to the hurry and carelessness which injure so many minds, and make half-learned people for life. Get your lessons off your mind, and then you will go to your amusements with a light and merry heart. Playing while a lesson is unlearned, is playing with a yoke on. Get rid of the yoke, and you will be as gay as a bird.

It is a good thing for children to talk freely with their parents about school affairs;—not to complain of your teachers, nor to find fault with your studies, nor to tell tales of your companions; all these things are hateful: but it is useful to talk over your studies, to show your

father and your mother what you have learned, and to ask their advice.

Last of all, do all that I have recommended as your duty to God, out of love to Him, and to make yourself useful in his work, if He spares you to grow up. Do this, and you will find a blessing in your school.

LETTER TENTH.

COMPANIONS.

MY DEAR MARY,—There is a Spanish proverb which says, *Tell me your company, and I will tell you who you are.* Any person may be known by the company he keeps. It is as true of a young lady as of any one. Perhaps you have read a little story or fable of Æsop, entitled “The Farmer and the Stork.” The farmer spread a net in his wheat-field to catch the cranes and geese which ate the grain he had been sowing. One day he came to his net, and found in it several cranes and geese, and among them a stork. As the farmer was about to kill them all, the stork pleaded very hard, and said he was neither a crane nor a goose, and that he was

kind and dutiful to his parents. All this may be true, said the farmer but I judge of you by your company, and you must suffer as they do.

The world judges in the same way. If you are seen with evil persons, you will be thought an evil person. Besides this, you will grow to be like your company. If your companions are foolish or wicked, they will soon make you foolish and wicked too. Evil communications corrupt good manners; this is what the Bible says, and every day we see it to be true.

Be very careful in choosing your companions. Perhaps those whom you like exceedingly at first, will turn out to be very disagreeable after a while. Very gay and entertaining boys and girls are sometimes both ignorant and wicked. What a dreadful thing it would be for you to fall into the company of such! In order to avoid this, be slow in

forming attachments. Do not be in haste to make friends. Never be intimate with any person until you have talked with your parents about it. Remember, they know far better than you what is right and proper. They know of dangers that are altogether unknown to you. It ought to be quite enough to make you break off any intimacy, to know that it is disagreeable to your parents. And let me say, *every young lady should make this a rule for life*. It would prevent many evils which you cannot now comprehend.

When you have gained a real friend, you have gained a treasure. Stick to your friend. Think of the Persian song that Henry Martyn heard his muleteer sing at night. Often have I repeated it to myself during the last twenty years.

“O, then, forsake thy friend for naught
That evil tongues may say;
The heart that fixeth where it ought,
No power can rend away.”

But then be sure your heart fixes "where it ought." Those who make friendships too quickly, are apt to break them too quickly. Be constant, be faithful, and you will be beloved.

It will do you good to have at least one companion a few years older than yourself. To be of use to you, she must be one that is sensible, educated, good-natured and pious. She must be a fit example to you in your studies, your manners, and your dress. She ought not to be a tattler or a sneerer; you will find out soon enough what these words mean. If you prefer her company to that of the gay little creatures of your own age, so much the better. She will tell you your faults without envy, and will save you from many a mortification.

Keep no company with a bold girl. A noisy romp; or a saucy, malapert miss, who loves to show

that she is not afraid; or a vixen, who is sharp as a she-fox. These are all odious. Avoid them. If possible, let them not come near you. Go not near them. The first improper expression from a companion's lips will be enough to put you on your guard. Though you must treat her with civility, and though you may never say so aloud, yet you should say to yourself, *I am to avoid that young lady.*

Among your young friends it is proper for you to be open and light-hearted. It is a beautiful thing to see a group of joyous girls, all enjoying one another's happiness. Let it never be said that you are proud and unsociable. Your companions will soon see it, if you hold your head high, and think yourself better than they. Especially never look down on any because they are poor. This is silly and unkind, and, what is more, it is offensive to God

Please to take your New Testament and learn those verses which you will find in the second chapter of the Epistle of St. James, and the first nine verses.

The last thing I have to say about your companions is this: Whoever they may be, try to do them good, and try to get good from them.

And let me hope that, among your young friends, you will not altogether forget the old one who now writes to you.

LETTER ELEVENTH.

READING.

MY DEAR MARY,—When I wrote you a letter about the book-case, I wrote chiefly about the outside of books. Now let us think a little about the inside.

Mary, are you fond of reading? I hope you will be able to answer, Yes. For if you do not love books, you will never know much. All the learned people in the world were once little children, and they all loved reading.

It is not the children of the rich only, who taste the sweets of reading. Books are a comfort to the poor also. They give amusement and information, on Sundays and leisure hours in the week, to multitudes of youth among honest, Chris-

tian labourers. What scene is more beautiful than a group of happy country children, on a summer evening, seated on the green with their new books? There they are, cheerful and loving, under the shade of their favourite tree.* The cottage has no one in it, for the father is in the hay-field, and the mother is milking. The children have watered the flowers, and tied up the vines; you may see the holly-hock which Sally planted, peeping over the fence.

There they sit, their hearts taken up with the story of David. John is stopping a moment to think of the wickedness of Absalom. See how kindly his arm is put around his sister Ellen. Even she, little creature as she is, can understand the delightful, sacred narrative. While Sally, who is two years older, leans upon her beloved brother, and catches

* See Frontispiece

every word with breathless attention. The birds in the trees are not netter pleased than they. And, long as these cottage-children live, they will remember with satisfaction their books upon the green.

Perhaps you think it makes no difference what books you read. This is a great mistake. Books are a sort of company; and they talk to you, even though they have no tongues. If they tell you what is good, they do you good. If they tell you what is evil, they do you evil. There are all kinds of books in the world. Some are very good, some are very evil; and there are many kinds between these two. The same books do not suit every body. One book is good for an old person, and another for a young person. One is proper for your mother or your teacher, and another is proper for you. The same books are not suitable at all times. Some

books are for study, and some for amusement. The books for study will be put into your hands by your teachers. I am going to speak only about the books which you read out of school.

The Bible is the best of books; but this will be for a letter by itself. And then it is not a book for amusement, but for sacred study.

Picture-books and story-books are those which little readers love. And if they have stories and pictures both, they think them the finest books in the world. I will not say that you are not to have this sort, and to like them too. I know how much is to be learned from good cuts and engravings; and now, when such things are so much cheaper and better than they used to be, it would be wrong to leave them out of books. The cuts are really a better sort of letters, where they are made aright. And I also know how

much useful knowledge has been taught by wise stories for the young. I remember the delight and the great profit with which I read the *Babes in the Wood*, and *Sandford and Merton*, and the *Pilgrim's Progress*. So I will not take away your stories, or your pictures either. But take care! You must not be all for pictures and stories. I will tell you what happened to Miss Price, a young lady whom you never saw. Miss Price was a sprightly girl of fourteen. She loved stories so much, that she borrowed all the story-books she could, from her school-mates. She did not care much whether they were good or bad, so that they were stories. When she went visiting, she had hardly taken off her bonnet, before she looked around to find what she called a "pretty book." By a pretty book Miss Price meant a story-book. When she had found one to her mind, she sat down and

devoured it. She forgot her friends, and was wrapt up in her book. This was rude. She would sit on the floor, or at the door, and never stop till she had ended the volume. This was foolish. It taught her to read too fast. It taught her to read for amusement only. It led her to read many improper and even wicked and false books. And though Miss Price read so much, she never became learned, or prudent, or wise; but grew up to be a poor, empty-headed novel reader, which she is to this day, though she is sixty years old, and reads with spectacles. I beg, then, that you will read what is good, even when you read for your pleasure. And to find out what is good, the shortest way is to ask those who know; that is, your mother, your elder sister, or your teacher.

The Sunday-school library will furnish you with hundreds of excellent books, most of which will enter-

tain you, and, if they are what they ought to be,* they will do you good, if you read them properly and at the proper time.

By degrees you must get into the way of reading books which are more sober and more instructive than those I have been speaking about. You will go from one sort to another, until you read biography and history, and even more serious and difficult subjects. Do not throw aside a book because it tells no tale, or because it has no pictures, or because it is dry. Perhaps it is dry only at the beginning. If you read a little further, perhaps you will become interested in it. Young ladies are in a very poor way to improve, if they lay down every thing that is dry.

* The American Sunday-School Union publish about 500 bound volumes, (1843;) and their publications may be safely recommended to children and youth of all classes.

When you are tired, lay the book down. I never knew much good to come of reading when one is tired. I mean, now, that reading which takes place out of school. Do not get into a slight, hasty, hurrying way of reading. Some girls pride themselves on getting through a book faster than anybody else. These are silly girls, indeed. They read every thing at a hop-skip-and-jump. There is no more merit in reading fast, than in eating fast: and reading too fast injures the mind just as much as eating too fast injures the body. Read slowly enough to understand every thing you read. Skip nothing. If the book is fit for you to read, it should be read from beginning to end. Read so that you will remember; and, if you are much pleased with particular parts, turn to them again, and read them over. Do the same with those

places which you find hard to understand.

By observing these rules, and especially, by following the advice of wise friends, instead of your own ignorant little head, you will escape many of the evils which make so many young ladies ridiculous, even in companies where they think they are greatly admired.

LETTER TWELFTH.

DRESS.

MY DEAR MARY,—It is hardly necessary for me to write to you concerning your dress, because your parents are too wise and too affectionate to let you go wrong in this matter. But if I went by this rule, perhaps I should not give you advice about any thing. It is not, then, to teach your parents, or because they do not teach you, that I choose these subjects. Shall I tell you my reason? It is this: Very young people are apt to think they are wiser than their parents. I will not flatter you: you may be tempted to think so yourself. And there is nothing about which children more commonly differ from those who know better, than in this very matter of dress.

Lay it down as a rule to yourself, to be cheerfully satisfied with the dress which your honoured parents give you. Perhaps you think it not fine enough, or not gay enough, or not fashionable enough. Perhaps you desire some article of dress like this, or that, which your young friends have. You will be ready enough to make your wishes known. Now, if your mother says *No*, utter not another word. Let her will be yours. Say to yourself, "My dear mother has never denied me any thing without cause; she is wiser than I; she knows best what is proper for me, and what she can afford."

Yes, my dear Mary, that kind mother has often sat up late, by the side of your little bed, toiling to prepare something for you to appear in. Parents have many an hour of anxious labour that is unknown to their little ones. Think of this. It is better that you should be a

little plainer than you like to be, than that your father and mother should lay out for you what might be used for wiser and better ends. You do not know the value of money as they do, especially in these hard times, when many, even of the rich, have been brought to want.

It is a common sin of the young, to set their hearts too much on dress. Do you remember those good lines of Dr. Watts?

“Why should our garments, (made to hide
Our parents’ shame,) provoke our pride?
The art of dress did ne’er begin,
Till Eve, our mother, learned to sin.”

Never think less of your companions because they are not so finely dressed as yourself. It may be, their poor parents have to work hard to enable their children to appear decently. Thank God that He has given you parents who are able to provide for you, but let not

Satan tempt you to be puffed up with a little outside show.

Did you ever see a young lady who looked too often in the glass? I have been told there are such. You may remember such a one. How the young thing admires what she sees in that mirror! How many changes she makes before it! How she admires that pretty face, those ringlets and ribands! How she smiles, and with what an air she walks away, and looks around to see who beholds her! O! let me pray you to despise all this. Be always neat and cleanly, even to the extreme; but when you find that you are dressed, let it go out of your mind. Try to forget yourself a little. It is a hard lesson, but it will do you good to learn it. Pride and vanity are sins against God; and I hope you will seek to please your Maker and Redeemer, even in your apparel.

Perhaps you think that a lady's

dress is too small a matter for me to write about. If so, you are wrong. The apostle Peter did not think so, for he speaks on this very subject, and lays down a rule for the raiment of Christian women; saying, "Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning, of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

I have long thought it one of the faults of young girls, in our day and our country, that they wish to be women too soon. Long before their school-days are over, they vie with one another in finery, and seek to appear just as fully and as expensively dressed as those who have already come out in company. If you wish to be happy and useful, be modest in this, as well as in other things.

Keep in the shade. Be humble and patient. You will get into the gay and evil world soon enough, and you will find those roses surrounded with thorns. Beauty, whether of face or apparel, is very fading. "Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."

LETTER THIRTEENth

CARE OF YOUR ROOM.

MY DEAR MARY,—Whether you have a room all to yourself, which is very desirable, or occupy one with a sister or companion, it is proper that you should keep it in order. *A place for every thing, and every thing in its place.* This would be a very good inscription for your table. It is a shame for a young lady to be very careful of her person, and very negligent of her room. It looks as if she had no real love of neatness and order, but did every thing to be seen of others.

Show me the inside of a lady's private apartment, and I can learn a great deal of her character. Suppose I see the table covered with books, papers, needles and thread,

brushes, combs, unfinished work, and half-eaten fruit. Suppose I find half the drawers open, and chairs covered with pieces of clothing, and the floor strewn with a dozen different articles; a ewer on the sofa, a bandbox on the bed, and a candlestick on the window-seat. I say to myself, here must be an indolent, disorderly little body. She has no love of order, no regularity of habits, no neatness. Unless she changes her ways, she will grow up to be a very disagreeable person.

You cannot begin too soon. Habits formed in childhood and youth, last a whole lifetime. An old habit is as hard to change as an old tree. Look at the oak in your father's lawn. Its largest limb has grown crooked and knotty. All the men in the country could not straighten 't. But a child could have straightened it when it was a twig. "Just as the twig is bent," you know, "the

tree's inclined." This is true of all habits. Take care, says a wise man, how you *set* your habits. If you set a hedge crooked, it will be crooked. Now, if you get into a habit of slovenliness about your room, your books, and your work-things, it will stick by you, and you will become a very disagreeable companion, and no one will like to visit you, or to entertain you.

The rule is good for a room, as well as for a work-shop, or any other place: *A place for every thing, and every thing in its place.* This will save many an hour of looking for things. Why is Miss Jane so late at family worship?—"O," replies the maid,—“Miss Jane cannot find her collar, or her apron, or her slippers.” Why is Miss Anne so late at school?—"She is busy looking for her Geography." Why is Miss Lucy absent from the Bible-class?—Answer. "She has mislaid her

Bible " Now, if Miss Jane, Miss Anne, and Miss Lucy had had a place for every thing, and every thing was in its place, they would not have lost a moment of time, and would have been in much better humour, besides. For I have observed, that nothing crosses a girl's temper more than the hurry of searching for things which have been mislaid. The indolent and careless child is ready to lay the blame on brothers, sisters, servants, or any one but herself.

If you only form the habit, it is as easy to do things right as wrong. It is as easy to lay away a dress, or a drawing, or a map, or a piece of work, or a riband, in a neat, proper way, as to throw them altogether in a heap. Shopkeepers know this, and hence they can pack away twice as much in a small space as you or I could do. I dare say you have often wondered at the ease with

which the woman who keeps the fancy store in Smith street will hand down any one of a thousand articles. She knows where she has put every one. She never puts it anywhere else. Therefore she never has to look anywhere else to find it. And, what is more, every thing in the shop looks tidy and graceful. Order and method produce convenience and beauty. Let it be so in every spot you have the care of; whether chamber, closet, cabinet, bureau, toilet, box, or basket.

The rule in farms is, *Leave things as you would find them.* That is, Do not leave your rake in the hay-field, or your axe in the wood; if you do, you will have trouble in finding them. I have often wished young ladies would have some such rule. Write it down—embroider it on your reticule—print it on your mind—**—LEAVE THINGS AS YOU WOULD FIND THEM.** You will then always

find them easily, and find them right. How much of life is spent in such questions as these?—O! where is my dressing-case? Has anybody run off with my combs? I do wonder who has thrown about my gloves in this way? Has any one seen a pencil-case? Pray help me to find that bunch of keys. Do you think I shall be in time for church? I've had an hour's search for my muff!—All such loss of time and temper will be prevented, if you will observe my directions. And let your apartment be always in order, so that it may never be a surprise or a mortification to you, to hear a knock at the door. So much about the care of your room.

LETTER FOURTEENTH

HOUSEHOLD WORK.

MY DEAR MARY,—You are not a queen or a princess, and therefore you must expect to do some work. Even if you were a queen or a princess, I would advise you to use your hands a little. They were given to you for that purpose, and you would soon be wretched, even in a palace, with scores of attendants and millions of money, if you had nothing to do. I dare say Queen Victoria finds a little employment useful, though I have never heard whether she rubs down furniture, or polishes the silver.

But you are not queen, Mary, yet. You are a little damsel of dear, free America. You will, with the blessing of God, grow up to be an American

woman. Now, American women have to work. One reason is, that the servants of this country are not so good as those of Europe; they are hard to be got, and they are often changed. So that every lady must know something about domestic affairs.

Do you not know that your mother often has a new maid-servant, who has almost every thing to learn? Do not you see that your mother could not instruct her, unless she had learned herself? Is she not sometimes for a day or more without a cook, without a chamber-maid, or without either? And do you not admire her for the cheerfulness, readiness, and ability, with which she goes about the labour herself? All this is unavoidable in our country. You must come to it. You had better prepare for it in time.

You should not complain of this state of things. It is good. It is

good for the health and spirits. Look at those young ladies who have never done any thing harder than to hem a handkerchief, dress a flower-vase, or knit a bead-purse. Are their cheeks red? No. Are their teeth sound? No. Are their hands plump? No. Are their spines straight? No. Are they good walkers? No. Do they come to their breakfast with an appetite? No. Do they come from a walk full of glee and spirit? No. They are pale or sallow, slender and stooping, narrow in the chest, weak in the limbs, with sunken cheeks, bony arms and hands, and a look of weariness and sloth which makes you almost pity them.

How different is the case with a young New England girl, who has 'earned a little of every household employment! Her father is wealthy, and has a number of domestics, but he has no idea of letting his daughter,

Grace, grow up in idleness. If Grace could be so foolish as to think that household work was beneath her notice, he would look very grave and say: My daughter! nothing that is your duty is beneath you. It is your duty to learn how to take care of the family. You may some day be poor, and then such knowledge will be all your living. But if you should be rich, you can never conduct a household, unless you know how things are done; and there is no way of learning how things are done, so good as to *do them*.

Miss Grace thinks with her father. She wishes to be a comfort to him. She keeps the daily accounts, and here she finds the great use of the arithmetic which she learned at school. She rises early, and sees to the dairy. She trips out among the flowers, and is not afraid of a wet shoe, or of blistering her little hand with a rake or a pruning-knife. She

sees that breakfast is in time and place; and when she has attended to the tea-things, knows that every article is in order, and in its place. She oversees the laundry-work, and has been long acquainted with clear-starching and ironing. She is already a good pastry-cook, and is at no loss how to toss up a pretty dessert, even in the worst seasons. She has been known to mount her pony and scour the neighbourhood for a supply of eggs or poultry, when there was an extraordinary demand. What is the consequence? Grace is the most rosy, healthy creature of her whole connection. Her sleep is like an infant's. Her joyous voice tells of a light heart and a good constitution. She never knows the moment when she does not know what to do next.

• Now, my dear Mary, I advise you to begin as early as possible to be your mother's helper in every part

of household affairs. Take as much off her hands as you can. Make yourself more and more useful. You will never regret it. It will never hinder your learning or your accomplishment.



LETTER FIFTEENTH.

NEEDLEWORK.

MY DEAR MARY,—Do not smile because a man writes about needlework. A very great and very wise man wrote about the same, as much as two thousand five hundred and forty-three years ago. This excellent writer thought fit to give a description of the true lady. The picture was made for Asia, but if you alter a few lines and colours, it will do for America. The lady whom he describes “seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.” She is an early riser. Do not think she is some poor sempstress; no: she is wealthy, and buys real estate, and has vineyards of her own. She must have a large number of dependents, for she rises

before day to give out work to her maids; and "her candle goeth not out by night." "Shelayeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff." Perhaps you think she confines herself to plain work. Not so. "She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple." "She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness."

Such is the picture of a lady, as painted by King Solomon. You will find it at length in the last chapter of Proverbs; and I hope you will take your Bible, find the passage in it, read it, and commit it to memory.

I know there are people who think they are wiser than Solomon; but I counsel you never to take their advice. I know young people who pretend that they are so fond of books and studies, that they have no time for work. But I have

always found them idle, if not foolish people. The best scholars I know, the best instructed and accomplished women I have ever met, are those who have paid great attention to the proper arts of female life.

Give some part of every day to domestic employments. Learn in time to sew, to knit, to cut out work, to do every thing with your hands, which you ought to know how to do when you grow to be a woman. I would have my daughters acquainted with every sort of work which ladies ever do. If they live in the country, it will do them no harm to card and spin a little now and then. And wherever they may live, they should know all about the use of the needle.

I do not forbid you to spend some of your time on ornamental work in lace, embroidery, and the like. In every age and country this has been the entertainment and occupation of your sex. It takes up many a

spare moment, enlivens company, enables one to gratify friends, furnishes cheap presents, and prepares for more solid and useful labours. But, after all, it is plain, domestic needlework, which is the grand thing. Give yourself a good deal to this. Try your hand at every thing of the sort, but be sure you try nothing without learning to do it well. Never get the name of a hasty, slighting, slovenly needlewoman. What is well done, says the proverb, is twice done. Learn to work well, and then you will learn to work fast. Finish every thing that you begin. I once knew a person who would begin a hundred things, and not finish ten. Be patient. Be willing to pick out wrong work, ever so often, and do it over. Be resolute, and you will conquer difficulties. Be uniform; that is, be always the same, and not, like some I have seen, very active

at one time and very slow and slothful at another. Be obliging; always ready to assist others in their work, and to teach them what they do not know.

You are growing rather too large to spend all your time in working for your doll. Perhaps you are ashamed at my even naming such a thing as a doll to you. Very well. You will find enough to do in working for the sweet infant that prattles about the house. And, besides this, you cannot begin too soon to employ yourself in working a little for the poor. The ancient Hebrew lady did so, as the wise man tells us. "She stretcheth out her hands to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy." Find out some poor person for whom you may make a garment. Help to fit out some child to come to Sunday-school. Alter some old affair, so as to have a resent ready, when the poor woman

next comes to your door to ask alms for her sick daughter. It is better to work for those who cannot work, than to give them money.

But my best advice on this subject is not so good as that which you will get from your mother and your teacher. Follow their advice. When your own notions about work disagree with theirs, you may be sure your notions are wrong. The true rule for children is to do as they are bidden. And if I should ever hear of your contending with your parents, or being slow and sullen in yielding to their will, I should grieve very much, and conclude that all my letters had been in vain.

LETTER SIXTEENTH.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

MY DEAR MARY,—A young lady is truly accomplished when her mind is cultivated, when her manners are gentle, and her heart renewed. These are the true accomplishments. But when we use this word in conversation, we commonly mean something much less valuable; something which is outward, showy, and meant to gain admiration. I am not going to quarrel with a word; so we may talk about the things themselves, which are thought to make a young lady accomplished. I have already said something about needle-work, perhaps as much as a man ought to say on such a subject. School-girls usually have a variety of little performances in this line,

which they teach one another. Do not waste time on them, but do not despise them. They will cheer long winter evenings. They will employ your fingers, while you listen to the book which your brother or your uncles read. They will afford you the means of showing your attachment to dear friends, by nice little presents. They will enable you to contribute to benevolent objects from your own earnings.

Drawing is reckoned one of the ornamental branches. It is such, but it is more. I consider it one of the useful ones. There is a great error in regard to this, among grown people as well as children. They look on drawing and painting as mere play. They may be so, for they are very entertaining: I know nothing more so. But they are improving and valuable also. I would have every child of mine to learn how to draw and paint. I hope

you will begin early, indeed, as soon as you can get a good instructor. For what is drawing but a sort of writing? It is the writing of things, not of words. You may carry it too far, but so you may reading or writing. Your parents will see to this, and you will obey them.

Ask your mother and friends to give you their advice about the different sorts of fancy-work which are taught in schools. Some of these are in paper, others in wax, in wire, in crystals, in shells, in mosaic, in gypsum, and in gold-leaf and feathers. I have seen some very tasteful, and others very absurd. Remember always, that such prettinesses are for odd moments, not for the serious hours of life.

What shall I say of dancing? It was once a religious service, and was practised by the best of people. It is now a frivolous and tempting indulgence, and is excelled in by some

of the most abandoned characters In itself, to dance is as innocent as to hop. But, if hopping ever brings my daughters to such company, such exposure, and such boldness, as are encouraged at balls and assemblies, I shall think it right for them to hop no more. I have observed that when people are converted, they very generally give up these things; and that those who frequent them most, are least interested in religion.

But, my dear child, you will be ready enough to run after what is ornamental and amusing, without any letters from me about it. They are good in their place, but you may be good and happy without them. They may be compared to the desert at table, or to flowers in a garden, or to jewels in a dress; you can do without them. As long as you live, try to think most of what is most important. Get the solids, and let the others come if they choose.

But never affect any sourness about these things. If you dislike any pursuit yourself, do not dislike your neighbour for enjoying it. Never pretend to be so very wise as to look down on the plays or employments of your companions, unless they are really foolish, or injurious. I know few things more ridiculous and disgusting than a fastidious, fault-finding, dissatisfied, sneering girl. These are the faults of peevish age; they sit badly on youth. Learn of those who know better than you; but never envy them, and never despise them. Humility and love are great accomplishments.

LETTER SEVENTEENTH.

MUSIC.

MY DEAR MARY,—When I wrote to you about what are called accomplishments, I said nothing of Music, though it is the chief of them. The reason was, I intended to devote a little letter to this subject; which I now proceed to do. When I was a little boy, I think there was more singing of hymns and less learning of music than there is now. It was not common to see a piano-forte, except in the houses of the wealthy. A guitar was a great rarity; and as to a harp, I do not remember to have seen one in a private dwelling, until I was in college. I need not tell you what a change has taken place since then. A parlour is hardly thought to be furnished now, without

a piano-forte. Many young ladies have both guitar and piano. And even the harp, a most expensive instrument, is becoming common among rich people. No boarding-school can gain pupils without a music-teacher: and the thrumming of beginners is the noise one oftenest hears in passing by such institutions.

In some countries, such as Italy and Germany, music is the delight of the common people. In America it is cultivated more for display. Young people who have no genius for it, beseech their parents to let them learn; and hence there are hundreds of wretched bunglers, who murder the tunes they pretend to play, and annoy whole neighbourhoods by their noise. I am a great admirer of music, especially of vocal music, which all judges consider the best. But I see no reason why every girl in the land should be dragged to the piano. I have had great delight from hearing

fine music, but I sometimes think I have had as much pain, from hearing what was bad ; and there is ten times as much bad as good.

Your parents will judge whether it is best that you should take lessons. Do what they say. There are reasons known to them, which cannot be known to you. But if you learn music, learn it thoroughly. It is impossible to do this, unless you give great attention to the principles. Begin wrong, and you will be wrong for life.

Many of the songs which I see on the music-stands of young ladies, are not fit to be sung by a rational and immortal being. Many of them are foolish, and some of them are wicked.

Cultivate your voice. Take every occasion which is offered to you, to learn to sing. I hope you will be ashamed to sing entirely "by ear," as it is commonly called. Learn to

read music with ease. Even little children in Germany do so. It is as easy as any other reading, if you only begin in time, and pay proper attention to it. Just consider, what a pleasant thing it is, to take up a piece of vocal music, and sing it off at sight, without the help of an instrument. Take good care not to be one of those young ladies who can never sing, unless they are seated at the piano.

Get as many of your brothers, sisters, and friends, as you can, to join you. In this way you will learn what is meant by *Harmony*. You will improve much faster in this way and with much more pleasure. How delightful it is, to see a group of happy children gathered on some holiday, and to hear their clear voices all joining in concord! I wish it was as common in our country as it is in some others.

If your parents find that you have

no love for music, and are unwilling to entertain your friends by practising what you have been learning. I hope they will lock up your instrument, and cause your lessons in this art to cease. But I expect better things than this. It is a pleasing recreation, and it softens the heart and prepares it for good impressions. Music is a kind of language in which we express what could not be expressed by mere speaking. For this reason God has chosen to make it a part of his worship: and this is the best use we can make of it. Begin, as soon as you sing at all, to sing the praises of God. How shameful, how ungodly is the conduct of some persons, who willingly sing worldly songs, but who are silent when God's praises are sung! Yet I know young ladies of this sort. At family worship, or in church, they cannot raise a note: you might think they were dumb.

If the world was what it ought to be, most of our singing would be religious. We should be constantly using our voices to glorify our Creator, and to celebrate the love of our Redeemer. Our morning voice would be heard, like the birds', and we should join our evening song with those of the robin and the dove. The day is coming when it will be so; when the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth.

Even now, the very best music of the masters is sacred music. And if your young companions despise psalms and anthems, and prefer the airs of the play-house, it only shows how little they know of the music of Handel, Haydn, and Beethoven. Of these you will learn more hereafter.

LETTER EIGHTEENTH.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

MY DEAR MARY,—Children are among God's kindest gifts. The Bible always represents it so. They are olive branches around the good man's table. What sight can be more delightful for a father and mother, as they sit at their door on a summer evening, than to behold their sons and daughters playing on the green! Even the passer-by enjoys such a scene, and stops in his walks to witness the game, and to hear the joyous laugh. There are brothers and sisters, children of the same parents, hand-in-hand, cheek-by-cheek, following the same sports, and listening to the same instructions. If any persons in the world ought to love one another, brothers

and sisters are the persons. And the sister, especially, should grow up, even from childhood, with a tender attachment to her brothers. Next to your father, your elder brother is your natural protector. His arm is stronger than yours. When you lean upon it you are not afraid. He feels more like a man, when you are under his care. No doubt he would risk his life to defend you. In return, you ought to be affectionate and dutiful, ready to gratify him, and to yield your own notions to his. Even if he is sometimes cross, learn to put up with it, and it will pass away. Always remember that he is older than you, and respect him accordingly.

Your younger brothers look up to you. Take care what sort of an example you set them. They will be very apt to do as you do. Be always ready to hear their little wants and sorrows; for they will

come to you with things which they would not dare to say to your parents.

Sisters have been known to quarrel with one another; to chide and scold, and blame one another; and, I have been told, even to pinch and slap one another. Though I am sure you will never be so wicked and unnatural as this, yet I think it my duty to warn you against some other evils which may spring up, even among affectionate girls. I mean sour looks, short answers, peevish complaints, sullenness, teasing, impatience, and the like. O, let not these clouds come over the clear face of youth! Love, and you will be loved. Seek humility and charity, and you will avoid many an outbreak of passion. If you are crossed, or even wronged, bear with it. That is the safest and the best way; it is Christ's way. Yield something every day, if necessary, to your sisters and

brothers. They will learn of you, and catch your spirit. Give up your own will in matters of mere pleasure. You cannot be too firm in matters of duty. Sweetness of behaviour will make you beloved, and promote that peace which is the greatest ornament of a family.

There is a great difference in the behaviour of brothers and sisters to one another; and these differences begin very early. In some families the brother and the sister are almost always together. You can see in a moment how much they love one another. Every look and every word are full of kindness. In other families the children are seldom together when they can avoid it. Each one likes the company of other young people better. When they are together, they are constantly fretting and squabbling. Children who begin in this way are very likely to go on so when they grow larger. The

way to avoid such habits is to be always considerate and forgiving. As far as possible, never give offence and never take offence. Love your brother or your sister as yourself. Rejoice when you can do them a favour. Be often thinking how you may give them some unexpected pleasure. As I said before, there is nothing more lovely than a loving household. So David thought: Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments. As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.

LETTER NINETEENTH.

TEMPER.

MY DEAR MARY,—If you wish to know a young lady's temper, you must live with her. Some people look very pleasant abroad, who are very ill-tempered at home. It is easy to look smiling, and to speak gently for a little while, even if you feel discontented or spiteful; but, to seem kind and pleasant for a long time together, you must be so in reality. Nobody can wear a mask always. However agreeable and polite you may try to be, it will be all in vain, unless you have a good feeling within. After all your trying, some little sharpness or rudeness will break out and betray you.

Think over your young friends and school-companions. Some of

them are more agreeable than the rest. Everybody loves them. They have more friends than the rest. Why is this? Is it because they are richer? No. Because they are more beautiful? O, no! for some who are great beauties are disliked. Then, is it because they are the most intelligent or accomplished? No. Why, then, does every one love to be near them? I will tell you. It is because they are gentle, sweet-tempered, and obliging. They think more of others than of themselves. They are not easily made angry. They are not proud, nor selfish, nor sullen, nor peevish. Their smile is not put on; it rises from their inward kindness: they cannot help looking happy, because they feel happy, and this makes all around them happy.

You see what a blessing a good temper is. Try to cultivate it. Try to check every rising of unkind

feeling. Such feelings will rise now and then : but crush them at once, if possible. Indulge them, and they will grow ; resist them, and they will die. Look on every one near you as a person whom you are to make as happy as you can. Let it be your business to be doing this, or trying to do it, all the day long. You cannot get so much pleasure in any way as by giving pleasure to others. If it is only a child, or a servant, or a stranger, or a beggar—no matter ; endeavour to do them some good. If you have nothing to give, if there is nothing you can do, you can at least give them kind words and kind looks. Nothing costs less ; but, in some cases, \ thing is worth more.

True religion is the thing to sweeten the temper. It can turn the lion into the lamb. Behold the meek and loving Jesus, and you will see the perfection of temper Be-

lieve in him, and you will be like him. Charity or love is the grace which makes happiness. If all the people in the world loved one another, "with a pure heart, fervently," what a happy world it would be!

When you are tempted to feel angry with any one, ask yourself if this temper is pleasing to God. Ask yourself if you are not, after all, in the wrong. "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." Forgive, or you will not be forgiven. Do not let hard thoughts of any one remain in your mind. They will be like festering sores there. Get rid of them at once. Never allow yourself to think you are slighted or treated amiss. Half the time such thoughts arise from foolish pride and sinful jealousy. You will not be troubled so much with these suspicions, if you follow the gospel rule, and esteem others better than yourself.

Some people will tell you that a

good temper comes entirely from nature. Some tempers are naturally more pleasant than others; but I am more apt to think that a *good* temper comes from grace. Pray to God to take away all your bad dispositions, and to give you good ones, by his Holy Spirit; and ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, who was all tenderness, love, and compassion; who went about doing good; and who died for his enemies, persecutors, and murderers.



LETTER TWENTIETH.

BEHAVIOUR TO SERVANTS.

MY DEAR MARY,—Children and servants make up a large part of many families. They have to be much together, and the quiet of the house depends very much on their behaviour to one another. A good servant is the very next thing to a good child. Where they have been long in a family, they are often esteemed and beloved, and should be treated with kindness and consideration. You need never be afraid nor ashamed to own that you look upon a faithful old domestic as one of your friends.

The comfort and usefulness of all who do the work of a family are connected with the way in which the children behave themselves

The young ladies of a household have usually more to do with the domestics than their brothers. So that if the girls are not kind, the servants must be unhappy. Often, very often, good servants leave their places on account of one pettish, ill-natured child.

My first advice is, Never keep company with domestics, except when directed by your parents. If your parent sees that any one of her female attendants is a fit companion for you, she will tell you so.

My second advice is, Always use kind and respectful language to the servants. There is no case in which you should do otherwise. They are generally older than you, and sometimes wiser and better. Do not take any airs of superiority. Surely you will not despise any of them because they are poor! Your Redeemer was poor, and "took upon him the form of a servant," when he was on

earth. Above all, do not use harsh, disrespectful words to those who are aged.

My third advice is, Avoid all differences with servants. Children are too apt to fall out with those who wait on them. It is sometimes the servant's fault; but, even suppose you have been treated amiss by a domestic, the proper way is to make it known in the gentlest manner to your mother, who will instantly set all right. What can be more unlovely than to see a young lady, who should be all sweetness and tranquillity, flying into a passion, quarrelling with the maids, and making the house ring with the tones of anger!

Never interrupt servants in their work. Mind your own business, and let them mind theirs. This is the way to keep the peace with all sorts of people, all your life long, but especially with servants. Do not meddle

with their employments. If you find them doing any little thing, by no means take it out of their hands, as if you could do it better. There is a good proverb which says : *Fools and children should never see half-done work.* You may know, by your own feelings, how very unpleasant it is to be helped when you do not need it. We all like to be let alone ; and some of the best servants I ever knew, would get a little out of humour from the vexatious whims of little meddlers. Let it never be said that your mother lost such or such a domestic, because she could not live in the same house with Miss Mary.

Be considerate in what you direct servants to do. Their time is precious. They have feelings as well as you. They can be weary as well as you. They cannot do two things at once, or be in two places at the same moment, any more than you

Think of this when you ask them to do any thing for you ; as, for example, when you send one on an errand, or when you wish their services late at night, or while they are at their meals, or when they are indisposed. Try to ask them without seeming to command. They would rather be requested than ordered ; and you will always be better served in the end.

Lastly, Do all you can to make every one near you wiser and better. Could you not teach that young girl to read ? Could you not give her some good tract or little book now and then ? Could you not help her in her Sunday-school lesson ? Could you not talk with her about the Bible ? In all these ways, and in many others, you may be useful and beloved, long before the days of your girlhood are over.

LETTER TWENTY-FIRST.

ALMSGIVING.

MY DEAR MARY,—Can you begin to do good too soon? Certainly not. I dare say your busy hands were employed, long ago, to convey money or food to the poor. And your parents will, no doubt, continue to give you trifling sums from time to time, to be bestowed on the needy. I think this a matter of vastly more importance than is generally thought. Habits are formed very early, and there is no habit which it is better to form at once, than that of doing good. Learn to relieve misery. Look at it, even though the sight is painful. Look at the lame, the sick, the blind, the wanderer, and the orphan, and be thankful for your own favours. Sing

that precious little hymn of good
Dr. Watts,

“Whene’er I take my walks abroad,
How many poor I see !
What shall I render to my God,
For all his gifts to me !”

If you do not know it already, I beg
you to get it by heart at once.
Every word of it is worthy of your
recollection.

You sometimes have money given
to you for your own. Would it not
be a good rule for life, to lay aside a
little portion of all such money, for
charitable purposes. The Jews used
to give at least a tenth to the Lord :
and he that hath pity upon the poor,
lendeth unto the Lord ; and that
which he hath given, will He pay
him again. I think this little alms-
portion of your pocket-money would
sweeten all the rest. Suppose you
lay all out in cake, or confections, or
picture-books, or ornaments ; these
are soon gone, and do no real good

to anybody. But the sixpence that buys a loaf for a poor woman, does more good to you than to her. You remember it with satisfaction.

It will never be hard to find some one to bless with a charitable gift. You know what our Lord said: "Ye have the poor always with you." Begin early to find them out. Some of the most deserving and the most needy require to be sought for. It is not the beggars who come to our doors, that are the most worthy; though these are not to be thrust away without inquiry.

One of the best things you can do for poor people, is to give them work. Then they earn what they get, and we always enjoy most what we work for. My dear Mary, you were not placed in this world to live for yourself. It is a great error to think so. Never let it go out of your mind, that your grand business in life is to make as many people happy as you

can. It is chiefly for the sake of fixing this in your mind, that I advise you to save some of your money for alms. It is but little you can give, I know; but that little will constantly make you think of your fellow-creatures, and you will grow up in the habit of doing them good and you will learn the happiness of living for others rather than yourself and, by grace, will become every day more and more like Him who went about doing good.

The soul is worth more than the body, and it is better to do good to men's souls than to their bodies. You do good to their souls when you help them to become true believers in Christ. There are many millions who do not know Christ. What can you do, to help them to this precious knowledge? You cannot go to them, for most of them are thousands of miles off; but you can send A few cents every month

from every little girl in America, would make a great sum at the year's end. If this sum were given to send the Bible, and missionaries, and teachers to the ignorant and wicked heathen, or good libraries to children and youth in our own country, who have no books, it would probably lead many of them to the knowledge of the blessed Saviour. How much happier it would make you, to think that you were helping to do this, than to remember laying out the same money upon trifles to eat or to put on !

When you grow older, I am afraid you will meet with foolish and ungodly people, who will laugh at you for giving to the ignorant and the unconverted ; but when you listen to them, think of Him who, " though he was rich, yet for your sake became poor, that you, through his poverty, might be rich."

LETTER TWENTY-SECOND.

MONEY.

MY DEAR MARY,—It is not money, but the love of it, which the Bible tells us is the root of all evil. Like fire and water, money is a good thing in its place. Yet it is dreadful to think of the multitudes who abuse it, and ruin themselves by it. There are many who are as really worshippers of gold, as any idolaters in the East Indies. There are millions of people who are servants of Mammon. Riches is a curse to great numbers; for, certainly, that is a curse which makes it hard to be saved; and we know who has said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than

for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

Even a very young lady, then, ought to learn something about this thing which occasions such evils. Perhaps you say, I will do without money. No, this cannot be, unless you go out of the world. The true way is, to learn how to use it.

Perhaps you have a little purse of your own. At any rate, you have had a little money, and you expect to have some again. It is very well for children to have small sums given them, that they may know how to use them; and they should be required to give an account of the way in which they spend their money. They are too ready to fancy that because it is their own, they may do what they please with it. They are impatient to lay it out. Every moment you will hear them saying, What shall I buy with this? They have no idea of saving. In

deed, a saving or hoarding child would be an unnatural creature.

But, young as you are, and small as your purse is, you must give an account of the way you empty it. You are forming habits. If you are wasteful now, you will probably be wasteful hereafter. If you lay out your penny foolishly when you are young, you will lay out your pound foolishly when you are old; unless, like Dr. Franklin, you learn wisdom by your losses: for, I suppose, you have read his famous story of the Whistle.

Learn now, not to lay out a penny for what is worth nothing. Most of the small change which is given to children goes for cake, candy, and the like. Now, I have scarcely ever been in a family where the children did not get enough of that sort of things without the trouble of buying them.

Try, my dear, if you cannot be

wise enough, young as you are, to lay out a little money for something useful. To do so requires a little saving. It will do you no harm to let a shilling lie a week or two in your purse, without burning its way out. Try this. I think you are not in danger of being a miser. And, after all, I mean that you should spend it for yourself. I only wish you to wait a little, and exercise your judgment by buying what is not worthless.

Could you not purchase for yourself some pretty, convenient article of furniture, or something for your writing-table, or your toilette? It would be better than to eat and drink your little fortune up. Could you not think of some pleasant, useful book, which you have long wished to have? Is there no present you would like to make to one of your dear relations or friends, on his birthday? Or, suppose you buy

the materials, and make up something pretty with your own hands, for that friend. All these are ways of spending money which would give far more pleasure than those which children commonly follow.

I have sometimes thought that a great deal would be saved, if people were brought up from their youth to keep a regular account of all that they spend. Ladies who are house-keepers find the importance of this when it is too late. Begin now. It will be entertaining to you to have a book, and to set down what you have paid out. It will teach you accounts. It will show you how much has gone foolishly, and so will teach you to be wiser in time to come.

The duty of giving something to the poor and to other good objects, is very plain. Indeed, my last letter to you was on this subject. It is just as true of you now, as it will be

when you come to have thousands, if you ever should, that you are a steward of God's property, and that you must give account to Him.



LETTER TWENTY-THIRD.

VISITS.

MY DEAR MARY,—Did you ever take notice that some children behave themselves worst when they are abroad? Like little eye-servants, they are dutiful enough while their parents are looking on, but very rude and disobedient when they are with other people. This should make you very careful to be as thoughtful about your conduct in the absence of your parents as in their presence.

It will be very long, I hope, before your mother will allow you to make fashionable calls, or to go into company. Much of what is so called, is part of that worldly vanity which true Christians ought not to countenance. But, even if conducted in a

religious manner, visiting is not the thing for young girls. I do not mean that you should not go sometimes to see your young acquaintances. Do so, by all means. Neither do I mean that you should not accompany your dear parents when they think it right to take you. But what I earnestly wish you may avoid is, beginning too soon to dress for gay visits, or coming out in mixed company. Alas! how many weak parents have followed the wishes of their inexperienced children, in regard to this! And how many vain girls have been utterly spoiled, by being adorned like women, and brought into fashionable circles at an age when they ought to have been sitting at their samplers, or running about in their sun-bonnets!

What I have to say, therefore, does not relate to these follies of fashionable people, but to the little,

plain, sociable, every-day visits, which friends, whether great or small; all the world over, are accustomed to make to one another.

When your school-hours are over, you sometimes snatch up your bonnet, and run over the way, or round the corner, or across the fields, to see a young acquaintance. Perhaps you are invited to spend the evening. If you have leave, you do so: and these are often improving as well as agreeable hours. At such times, fix it in your mind that your behaviour is observed by many eyes. These friends know your parents; they are looking to see how their daughter behaves herself. A single rude word, or bold act, or neglect of civility, will be charged against those whom you love best. The faults of young people, away from home, arise very much from heedlessness. They are so animated and excited by the new scenes and good

company, that they forget themselves, and become rude and boisterous; or else they think they are slighted, and pout or grow sullen. I mention these most disagreeable things, in the hope you will shun them. To do so, remember every moment what I have said elsewhere, that your business is to make all around you happy. If this is fixed in your mind, you will be truly courteous and respectful, and every one will love your company.

The very best rules for every thing, are the Bible-rules. Be humble, be meek, think less of yourself than of others, love your neighbour, and be mindful of the presence of God; observe these rules, and you will go aright in any company. You will then appear to be only what you really are; modest and affectionate. You will not do things merely to be gazed at. You will not take on airs, as if you were

better than others. You will not make sport of any one, nor look down on any thing because it is odd, nor boast that such and such things are so much nicer and finer at your house. You will not find fault, and tease, and chide. You will not grow sulky, and bridle your little neck, and declare that you will never visit there again. You will not selfishly want the first of every thing and the best of every thing for yourself. All these shameful and sinful practices you will escape, by simply following the rules of God's holy word; which should be your guide from infancy to old age.



LETTER TWENTY-FOURTH.

RECEIVING VISITS.

MY DEAR MARY,—When I come to see you, I shall look carefully to see whether you observe my little directions. It will give me great mortification, if you are shy and cold; if you run into corners, or hide behind your mother's chair. Be as modest and retiring as you please, but remember it is no part of modest reserve to be inhospitable. Give every one a welcome look. I will pardon you for blushing a little, or for a little fearful shake in your voice; but, in your father's house, you must learn to receive your friends as if you were glad to see them.

If you should chance to be at home when no older member of the

family is present, you may have to entertain company for a few minutes or, indeed, if they have come far, for some hours. Do this as kindly, quietly, and modestly as you can; these friends will esteem you for it, and forgive any little blunders you may commit.

When visitors come in to see your mother, be quick in helping them in every thing they really need; but do not bustle about unnecessarily: this is what is called being *officious*, and it is very disgusting. Let your whole manner be quiet, simple, and respectful. *Speak when you are spoken to.* When a lady or a gentleman asks you a question, do not look down, simper, stammer, mutter, bite your nails, nor play any of the tricks of bashful girls. Do not you know that all these things only draw more attention to you? If you had answered at once, it would all have been over,

and you would have been forgotten the next minute ; but now, that you have reddened, and coughed, and, perhaps, shed two or three tears, everybody is looking at you, and the matter gets worse and worse. But, pray, do not run to the other extreme, and join in the conversation when you are not desired to do so.

Sometimes your own young friends will come to see you ; it may be to drink tea, or even to spend a few days. O, how delightful this is to young persons who are well-bred, and love one another ! Well do I remember days and weeks of this kind, which I spent, almost thirty years ago, with young friends in the country. Some of them are growing gray, like myself, and others are no more in this world. If there is any time when you ought to be particularly obliging, it is when your friends come to see you. Now is the time to make them happy. Do.

• all in your power to make them feel at home. Anticipate their wants. Bear with their disagreeable ways. If any of them are rude and disobliging, do not imitate them in this, but pity them, and set them right. Never utter a single word to give them a moment's pain, unless it is something which you cannot, in conscience, avoid saying. Show them all that you think will please them, but do this without ostentation. Bear in mind that you are to please them, and not they to please you. They are your guests; therefore, let them have the choice of amusements, and do not urge them to do what they do not wish.

• If you can do something to make these visits profitable as well as pleasant, you will be all the happier for 't. Such visits will leave their sweetness in your memory, long after they have passed by. The instructive book which you and

your friends read together under the shady maple, will be remembered by you many, many years hence.

The best way to avoid unpleasant visitors, is to make it a rule to invite no one to your house, unless with your parents' leave. At your age, it is impossible for you to judge who are good and who are bad companions, without some help from your father and mother. And when they have decided this point, never say another word. Let their will be your law. They know a hundred-fold more about these things than you; and they are as desirous as you can be, that all your visits should give you pleasure.

LETTER TWENTY-FIFTH.

LETTER-WRITING.

MY DEAR MARY,—Though I have written you twenty-four letters, yet I have not had a single one in reply. ‘Very well,’ I seem to hear you say; “this is just as it should be: it is time enough for me to begin to be a letter-writer.” That will depend, Miss Mary, very much on the kind of letters you write. I know that some young girls make themselves very ridiculous by a sort of rage for corresponding with their acquaintances. But nothing is more proper than for a young lady, even of the most tender years, to write a little letter to her mother, her brother, or her teacher, or to such an elderly friend as myself, for example. Such epistles give great pleasure. When your brother goes to college, there are

few things which he will value more than a letter from his sister Mary.

What I wish you to consider is, that whatever is worth doing at all, is worth doing well. There is a right and a wrong, even in letter writing; and, if you wish to write well when you are grown up, begin to write well now.

Be sure that you have something to say. It is poor work to seat yourself at your desk, and bite your nails, and dip your pen in the ink fifty times, before you can come at a thought. Young people mistake, also, as to what should be put in a letter. You need not try to write fine sentences and big words. If you try to do so, you will learn to write affectedly, and the habit may stick by you all your life. Think of what you would say to your brother, if he were sitting by you, and holding your hand. That is just the thing he will like to read. Is it a pleasant little piece of

news?—Put it down; it is the very thing. Is it a kind wish that he were by you?—Down with it; it will be better still. Is it some little project you have, of surprising your dear parents with a Christmas present?—Write it down. Writing a letter is only talking with a pen. Be simple, natural, unaffected, and affectionate, and your letter will be sure to please. I know of nothing which injures a letter so much as *effort*. By this I mean, trying to do better than you can. The pleasantest letters I ever received, were from ladies; and the best of these were those which seemed to trickle out of the pen, as if the writer never thought what was to come next. Remember what I say, *Effort spoils letter-writing*.

I do not mean that you should be careless in writing. By no means. Be careless in nothing. All your life, make it a rule to do every thing

as well as you can. Take a fair sheet of purely white paper. Be sure you have a perfectly good pen, and the very blackest ink. Get your mother to show you where to begin, where the date is to be, and how far from the top you should write the little opening salutation. Leave a sufficient blank margin. Take pains to spell every word right, and to place your commas and other stops exactly; to dot every *i*, and cross every *t*. Learn to close and sign your name in a becoming way. Do not delay to find out the neatest and most elegant mode of folding and sealing your letter, and direct it on the outside in a fair, legible hand. Do every part of this with your own hands.

It is good to practise what we learn; so, pray, begin at once; get your pen and paper, write your letter, fold, and seal it, and then write on the back the name of your friend and well-wisher, —————

LETTER TWENTY-SIXTH.

THE FORMATION OF HABITS.

MY DEAR MARY,—What a serious thing it is to consider, that you are now forming habits for life! Ought you not to take care to form none but good ones?

Perhaps you only half-believe me. When you hear older people say, that the habits they formed when they were young have never left them, perhaps you say within yourself, "But it shall not be so with me; for, even if I do fall into some bad ways, I will take good care to get out of them when I grow older." My dear child, this is just the snare which Satan is always laying for the young. There is no safety but in beginning aright. If you wish a grape-vine to grow in a certain direc-

tion, you bend it in that direction while it is young. If you wish to have a green hedge in your garden, you set it as you would have it to grow. If you wish to have apricots, you never think of planting a plum tree, in the hope of exchanging it after a year or two. If you wish to have health when you are a woman, you must try to be a healthy child. If you wish to have a good memory when you are grown, you must cultivate your memory now. And, if you wish to be every thing that is good and lovely hereafter, you must begin to be such at present.

When I speak of evil habits, I do not mean habits of vice or open transgression. I trust Divine Grace, given in answer to the prayers of your parents, will ever keep you from these. But I mean those habits in common life which are formed by repeated practice. For example: I once wrote you a letter about the

habit of early rising. I might write to you about the habit of punctuality, or frugality, or civility, or diligence; they are good habits; they should be cultivated. The sooner you begin, and the more you practise them, the stronger they will become, till, at length, no one will think of you, without thinking of these habits. *Habit*, says the proverb, *is a second nature*. Then I might say much about the habit of procrastination, or putting things off till to-morrow; the habit of slovenliness; of loquacity, or talkativeness; of levity; or of impudence. These are evil habits, which should not be allowed for a moment.

It is wonderful how soon an evil habit is formed, and how hard it is to get rid of it. We see it, even in little things; in very little things. There is a young lady, whose name I will not mention, lest I wound her feelings, who has a habit or trick of

biting her nails. It is a disgusting practice, which ought to make her blush, whenever she is detected in it. Yet it has become so strong, that, I dare say, she will go on gnawing her finger-nails to the quick, for years to come. Another little friend of mine has a habit of cracking the joints of her fingers. Though her father, mother, and brothers have told her how foolish and how ill-bred it is, she has done it so long, that she declares it is impossible for her to desist. You see how hard it is to break off an evil habit. Beware how you contract any such. If you wish to keep weeds out of your flower-bed, you pull them up when they are young, as soon as you can seize them. Do the same with ill habits. Make war upon them the moment you see them. Crush them, as you would the eggs of a viper

Education is intended to form

good habits, and destroy bad ones
You know the golden lines:

“ 'Tis education forms the youthful mind;
Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined.

Act upon it. Every day, every hour,
you are doing something to form a
habit. How important, then, is this
spring-time of your life, and how
careful should you be to use it, so
that you may not lament it hereafter!



LETTER TWENTY-SEVENTH.

AIR AND EXERCISE.

MY DEAR MARY,—When Doctor Smith goes to your house, you are ready to wonder why he talks so much to your mother about air and exercise. The doctor is wise, and he is kind. He knows what is good for young people, and what evils arise from keeping too much within doors. He has had hundreds of patients whose diseases have arisen from this very cause. The habit of taking abundant exercise in the open air is one which you must not fail to form.

Very little children need no directions on this subject. They are taking exercise all day long, running, skipping and leaping. But when girls are growing up to be young

ladies, they are apt to change their habits. They sit for hours moping over a book, or a piece of work. They dislike to move. Walking makes them weary. They grow pale, lose their appetite, get a stoop in the shoulders, and look peevish and miserable. The indolence and the gloom increase upon them, till, at last, unless they take warning in time, they go off in a consumption, or some other wasting disease.

There are a hundred different ways of taking exercise, and some of these you will certainly find pleasant. You may walk; you may ride; you may take an airing in a carriage or a boat; you may swing; you may skip the rope; you may trundle a hoop over the garden-walks; you may work in the flower-beds; you may play battledore. I have no doubt you could teach me, on this point, more than I can teach you. But, pray, Miss Mary, do you practise what

you know? Come, now, answer me a few questions. How long is it since you walked four miles in a day? How many long walks do you take in a week? How far can you walk at a good pace without weariness? Do you make it a point of sitting down to no meal without having gained a relish for it by exercise? Are your cheeks red? Are your arms firm? These are questions which you must be able to answer satisfactorily.

It is said that the ladies of England are more healthy than those of America, and that they take more exercise. I can testify, that of all my acquaintances, the most healthful, blooming and cheerful are those who are most active out of doors.

The best exercise is that which is taken in the open air. There is every thing to invite you out. If you are in town, there are a thousand interesting sights and engagements.

If you are in the country, you can scarcely open your eyes without finding what is worth looking after. Go out into the fields and woods. Strike out new paths. Learn the names and characters of all the forest trees. Make collections of plants and flowers. If you have a gentle horse and good attendants, ride about before breakfast, and you will soon find your advantage in it.

In winter, or in rainy weather, set your wits to work to invent agreeable exercises. Pace up and down the long piazza or gallery; run up and down stairs; learn how a broom feels in one's hand; polish the furniture; do any thing rather than loll on a sofa or lounge in a rocking-chair.

If you lose your health, you will probably lose your spirits. If you lose your spirits, you will become a source of anxiety to all your affectionate friends; and will be worth

very little to those you wish to gratify and assist. There is no earthly talent for which we are more accountable than our health.

I have long been convinced that a habit of bodily sloth is a principal cause of ill health. Fight against this habit. Never be afraid to move about. Be quick, sprightly, and prompt in your motions. If your thimble is left up two pair of stairs, go for it instantly. Do not linger, and say, "I will wait a little,"—go at once. Form this habit in every thing. And, when the clock strikes the hour for a walk, close your book, put up your needle, get your bonnet and shawl, and away to healthful motion.

LETTER TWENTY-EIGHTH.

CONVERSATION.

MY DEAR MARY,—When I was a child, I used to be told that, as I had two ears, but only one tongue, I ought to hear much and speak little. Afterwards, my Latin lessons used to say, “He is a wise man whose words are few.” Then I read the words of Solomon; “In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin; but he that restraineth his lips is wise.” “He that keepeth his mouth, keepeth his life; but he that openeth wide his lips, shall have destruction.” Also the words of the apostle James: “Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak;” and again, “If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle

the whole body." All this taught me, that it is a dangerous thing to let the tongue run without government. I wish I had practised more what I learned.

The world cannot go on without some talking, and speech is one of the most blessed gifts of God. But there is more evil spoken than good, and, if we get the habit of foolish talking when we are young, it is likely we shall talk foolishly all our days.

Childhood and youth are the season for listening and learning. The innocent prattle of a child is agreeable to every kind heart, if it is not carried too far; but it must be in the right time and place. You know how much some little girls offend by perpetual talking and giggling, and, I hope, you are determined to avoid it. Your parents and teachers will tell you when you talk too much, or too loud, or at improper

times. Yield to them instantly, for they are wiser than you. You will often think you are talking very agreeably, when it is quite the reverse; and you should be thankful for being told so.

When older persons are conversing, never put in a word unless it is absolutely necessary. It is so, when you are spoken too. Always look the person in the face to whom you are speaking; not with boldness, but firmly and modestly. Do not hang your head, or turn away your person, as if you had been detected in a fault. When you are with any of your friends or relations, talk as much as you see is pleasing to them.

Never interrupt another who is speaking. Begin now, and practise on this rule, even with your young companions. If any one interrupts you, be silent at once, and begin again, if necessary, when no one is talking. Two or three little ladies

together, sometimes make as much noise as a dozen grown persons. It is very disagreeable, when a young lady breaks out into boisterous laughter, or giggles foolishly at trifles, or at some thought in her own head. Moderate laughter is innocent and healthful, but you should leave what is called the "horse-laugh" for sailors and tipplers.

When I advise you not to be too fond of talking, you must not suppose that I recommend a sullen silence. This is even worse than loquacity, or talkativeness. But be sure you have something to say, and "think twice before you speak once." Neither do I wish you to be so bashful as not to answer when you are spoken to. This is foolish and contemptible. One may be self-possessed and distinct in talking, and yet be truly modest. This embarrassment and hesitation, and all

these tricks of ill-bred misses, arise from a silly little pride.

There is nothing more instructive than good conversation. It teaches us more than books. But, then, you must talk with those who can teach you something. Solomon says, "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise." Take heed with whom you talk. It is a good sign for a child to love the conversation of her parents. They love you best, and are most desirous to do you good. They know you best, and can say exactly what you need to hear.

Be careful not to repeat in one company what you hear in another. Those who do so, get the ugly name of *tattlers*. Especially, never repeat what you have said at home or in school. There are women whose greatest entertainment and business it is, to go from house to house, day after day, hearing news, and telling it again. Beware of having an itch-

ing ear to learn news, and an itching tongue to retail it. Beware of gossiping and scandal.

And, remember, "that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment."



LETTER TWENTY-NINTH

TRUTH.

MY DEAR MARY,—The word *liar* is a dreadful word, and is considered one of the greatest reproaches. But the sin itself is worse than its name, and you know who hath said that “all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

I have sometimes thought that great evil arises from giving trifling names to heavy offences. If we give a little name to a great sin, we may learn to think it a little sin. Thus, drunkenness has many funny names, which serve to make people familiar with it, and so conceal its baseness. Lying, also, is called story-telling; a lie is called a story,

or a fib, or a flam. But all the time the lie is nothing but a lie, hateful to God, and injurious to our fellow creatures.

It is my hope, dear Mary, that you will grow up without having ever told a wilful falsehood. But, the more you hate it, the more you will shun it.

Some persons are famous for lying. Scarcely any thing is believed because of their saying it. They have a habit of falsehood. Do you wish to know how they acquired this habit? By neglecting to speak the simple truth when they were young. A lying child generally becomes a lying man or woman.

The evil begins in what we think very little offences, if they are offences at all. By practising exaggeration, one learns to practise falsehood. Exaggeration means talking largely; using great words for little things, and making a thing seem

larger, or worse than it really is. Thus, if a young lady feels weary, she declares that she is tired to death. Or, if she tells of something very amusing, she says she almost died of laughing. A warm day is the "hottest day she ever felt in her life." A plain woman is said to be the most horrid ugly creature she ever laid her eyes on. All this is very common, and seems very harmless; but it is against the truth. These expressions arise from a lively imagination, and strong feelings; but falsehood arises from the same. And, therefore, we should take care not to let our imagination or our feelings run away with us.

Whenever you undertake to give an account of any thing, be thoughtful. Take care to state every particular precisely as it is. Say no more than you know. Avoid all very large and very strong expressions. I once heard a young lady

say there were about two thousand birds on a certain tree; I suppose there might have been fifty. She did not think she was speaking an untruth, but she showed that sort of carelessness which leads to exaggeration.

A character for truth is an excellent thing. It is soon found out whether a young person is conscientious or not, in this particular. You perceive this in the case of servants; for your parents will at once dismiss a domestic who is given to falsehood. Such domestics are a curse to a household. They often mislead the children of the family, and tempt them to speak untruths. A habit of making many excuses, leads to falsehood. Confess what you have done amiss instantly, and fully, and without waiting to be charged with it. You will fare all the better for it, even in this world.

Humility and modesty help us to

avoid falsehood. Thousands of the lies which are told every day, are lies of vanity. A person wishes for admiration: so he says something that is not quite true, in order to be applauded. Miss Bell is fond of saying how rich her father is. She tells her school-mates of his fine carriages; when, really, the good gentleman has but one. She tells of her wealthy uncle in England; she has no uncle in the world. Miss Frances wishes people to think that she is a genius: so she declares she has not looked at that lesson, though she knows she has studied it for half an hour. But both Miss Bell and Miss Frances will be detected in a very short time.

The best way to avoid this dreadful evil, is to remember the presence of God at all times. *Thou God seest me.* This will keep you from foolish and false words.

LETTER THIRTIETH.

THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

MY DEAR MARY,—It is now more than thirty years since I went to a little school, kept by an excellent old lady. In those days we used to call it a “madam’s school,” and in England it would now be called a “dame-school.” Our good school-mistress lived to a great age, and died only last year, in Easton, on the Delaware. Well do I remember the childish sports and childish fears of those days.

There were then no Sunday-schools in America. Shortly after, they were introduced into Philadelphia, and elderly persons will tell you how much interest was taken in them by good old Father Eastburn, and other servants of

Christ. The case is very different now. These religious mercies have spread themselves, not only over Philadelphia and America, but, I might almost say, over the Christian world.

I have often heard parents say, that their children learned more in a few hours at the Sunday-school, than they did all the week besides. It is not always the case, indeed, but there are some reasons why it may often be so.

In the Sunday-school the teacher bears no rod. The little folks are led by cords of love. If the teacher does his duty, he gains the affection of his class; because they see that he longs for their improvement; they hear his pleasant words, and are soothed by his benevolent smile. He explains to them what they have been studying through the week, and gives encouragement and commendation to such as are diligent

All this keeps up the attention and engages the heart.

Then it is the Lord's-day on which the school is taught; and it often meets in the place of worship, or near it. All are clean and in their best clothes; all are enjoying the sweet influences of the Sabbath. Besides, they have had something to do with their lessons for six days before; and, if they are diligent, the scholars are almost prepared when they enter the school-room.

Again, the Sunday-school lessons are out of the Bible; the best of books, and the most interesting of books. There are no histories so delightful as those of the Scripture; and a few years at the Sunday-school will take you over them all. What can be more awakening or instructive to a company of sensible, inquisitive children, than to be constantly becoming acquainted with Abraham, and Joseph, and Samuel,

and David, and Daniel; or, better still, with our adorable Redeemer, and his twelve apostles? No wonder they learn fast, when all they have to learn is better than the best story-book in the world.

The Sunday-school has a library, too. If you are dutiful and attentive, you will carry home one of the many books which have been made on purpose for Sunday-schools. This does not often take place in common schools; but every Sunday-school library is furnished with books for every age and character. This is a great blessing to many a poor child, and to many a parent also. To buy the same number of books for yourself, would take, perhaps, a hundred dollars. Each of these you can take and read, just as if you had bought them with your own money. But how could you get these, if there were no Sunday-schools?

Common schools are of the great-

est advantage. We cannot do without them. We should honour them and bless God for them. But too many of our common schools take no care of the principal thing—the salvation of the soul. Pious teachers, like those whom I knew in my childhood, used always to pray with their scholars, and make them say religious lessons. But there are many schools, where, alas! the book of God is never read. You know how different it is in the Sunday school. There, the salvation of the soul is the great object: it is for this that the school was set up. This gives a serious air to every child that thinks about it; and the divine truth which is learned, and explained, and talked about; and the prayers, and the exhortations, and the sweet hymns, make all the attentive scholars feel very peaceful, and very much in earnest.

Remember these things, my dear

child, when the Lord's-day morning comes. Have your lessons perfectly learned, early in the week. Go early to the school; and, while you are there, be solemn, still, and mindful of your duty. Never forget that every lesson and every word is intended to do your soul good; and often ask yourself whether you are any nearer to heaven, for being a Sunday-scholar. In time, if your life be spared, you will be able to teach others also; and I wish you no higher honour than that of being a faithful Sunday-school teacher.



LETTER THIRTY-FIRST.

BEHAVIOUR IN CHURCH.

MY DEAR MARY,—There is no sound in a great city more pleasant to people in general than that of the church-bells. And there is no sight more agreeable than that of hundreds and thousands of well-dressed and orderly persons, going to their several places of worship. When I meet these groups or processions, on a fine spring morning, my heart rejoices that I am in a gospel land ; and, as I see parents and children going up to the house of God in company, I do not stop to ask whether they are Methodists, or Lutherans, or Episcopalians, or Presbyterians, or Baptists, or Friends ; for I rejoice that they are all at liberty to worship God according to their own belief.

But, how many enter the place of worship without any thought of God ! Some go to see and be seen ; some to gain the good-will of men ; some to gratify their curiosity ; some from mere habit ; and some because they do not know what else to do with themselves. And, when they have entered the house of prayer, how different is the conduct of individuals ! Those who fear God are silent, serious, and quiet. Those who fear him not, are restless, or even noisy ; some smile and whisper ; others gaze about as if they were in a play-house.

“ Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.” This proverb of Solomon applies to the conduct of young persons in church ; and I often make up my mind about the children of my friends, from their behaviour in this place. There-

fore remember that the eyes of many are upon you, and, especially, that the eye of God searches your very thoughts.

Be early at public worship. If you go late, you disturb others, and unfit yourself for duty. Nothing can be well done in a hurry. Some persons have the discredit of being always late at church. Some do this on purpose to attract notice. But, you will remember, that the beginning of divine exercises is as precious as the end.

When you have taken your seat, be still. You have come to worship. Let your thoughts be serious, and about divine things. Do not look around, as if you wished to examine every dress and bonnet in the house. Especially, avoid the vulgar habit of turning round to stare at those behind you, or at such as enter the house after you. Speak not one

word, unless it be absolutely necessary ; and, if young companions try to catch your eye, or tempt you to a smile, turn away your looks, and they will know that you reverence the worship of God.

The prayers which are offered are for you, as much as for others. Your heart should join in them ; and you should always place yourself in that posture which is most devotional. If you are thinking about other things, while the people of God are praying, you are guilty of pretending to worship, while you do not.

The praises which are sung, are for you also. Join in the psalms and hymns. Let your youthful voice be trained, from the very earliest years, to glorify God. No Christian soul will forbid you. I know, indeed, that the chief-priests and scribes were offended, when the

children uttered hosannas to the Son of David; but what was the reply of Jesus? “Yea, have ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfectest praise?” ‘The blessed Saviour loves to receive the praises of children.

When the Scriptures are read, be all attention. It is an excellent practice to find the place, and read it in your own Bible; and it is much to be regretted that this custom, which is universal in some countries, is uncommon in our own.

When the minister of Christ preaches the gospel, I need scarcely say, you ought to listen to every word. Take notice of what he says. Remember the subject of the discourse. As far as possible, avoid uneasiness, restlessness, and drowsiness. I sincerely hope you will never go to sleep in church.

Many persons seem to think, that

as soon as the public worship is at an end, they may do as they please. You will see boys and girls rushing out, as if they were going to a playground, and making the gallery-stairs clatter with the noise of their feet. It is still the Lord's-day. You ought still to be thinking of what you have been doing. Go out, therefore, as quietly as you came in; and go home with your dear parents silently, or listening to what they say. It is no time to be making remarks about who was there, and who was not there; about Mrs. A.'s shawl, or Miss B.'s bonnet. Much Sunday-talk is of this nature; and the way home from church is carefully watched by the wicked one, who is busy with the hearer after the seed is sown, that "he may catch away that which was sown in his heart." Matt. xiii. 19.

When you have returned from

public worship, it will be a useful practice for you to go to your room for a few moments, and pray for God's blessing on these means of grace.



LETTER THIRTY-SECOND.

THE BIBLE.

MY DEAR MARY,—Your pious parents have long since taught you to reverence the Holy Scriptures. You have been led to read that blessed book ; you have learned the meaning of various parts ; and you have committed many passages to memory. You are, I trust, in the habit of reading a chapter or two every day.

All this is well : but I wish you to do more than this—to go further, and become still better acquainted with God's inspired volume. It is to be the study of your life. The day will never come, I hope, when you will close the book, and say, "I have done with it." You may do so with other books, when you have got from them all they can give you ;

but this is the book of heavenly truth, and it can never be exhausted. You may draw all the water out of a cistern or a pool; but a living fountain will pour out its stream faster than you can receive it. The Bible is such a fountain: and as you need water every day, as long as you live, so you need this water of life, until you are removed to another world. Every time, therefore, that you take up your Bible, say within yourself, "This is to be my study, as long as I live."

If you are ever saved, Mary, it will be by believing God's message, contained in this volume. Does not this make it the most important of all volumes? Is it not worth more to you than all the books of all the libraries on earth? Do not wonder, then, that I beseech you to look on it, and think of it, and follow it, as you do no other book.

Remember what the apostle Paul

says to Timothy; for the same thing may hereafter be said of you: "that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." 2 Tim. iii. 15. O! what a privilege; and how much you have to be thankful for! Millions there are, who never heard of the Scriptures; millions there are, of people called Christians, who are not allowed to read the Scriptures in their own language. But whenever you choose, you may go to the sacred volume. When you do so, remember it is God who there speaks to you; for, as you may see in the very next verse to the one I just now wrote, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God."

Besides the lessons which are set you by your parents and teachers, I advise you to make a point of learning something out of the Bible every

day. 'There are many places too difficult for you at present ; there are places which are difficult even for the oldest and wisest men ; but there are places enough where even a child may find comfort and instruction. Learn all about the histories of the Bible, especially the history of our blessed Lord and Saviour. Let this be printed on your youthful heart. Do not fail to commit a verse or two to memory every day. It is a good plan to learn a little portion every night. You can then think it over as you go to sleep, and fix it in your mind early the next morning. It is another good plan, to go to your Bible in the morning, before you go to any other book. How often have I known young people keep a book under their pillow, to read as soon as it was day : but it was not the Bible. I should rejoice to know that my dear Mary had such a love for the best of books, that she

would rise early, and take delight in its pages, before others were up in the house. On a fine summer morning, take the volume in your hands, open your window, and seat yourself to read, where you can catch a glimpse of the green fields, the waving woods, and the freshness of nature. Then, when you read of the goodness and the grace of God, you can raise your eyes and behold signs of it all around you. Every bird that sings, every flower that opens to the rising sun, every breath of odours from the meadows and gardens, will be more lovely, when you think of them as coming from the hand of God. The Bible says much about these things. Get up early, and read the 103d and 104th Psalms, and you will know what I mean.

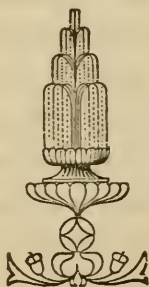
There is another thing which I feel it to be my duty to say to you. You are young, and youth is the time of gayety and hope. You feel as if

your whole life was to be full of pleasure. Do not mistake here, my dear child. Do not think to go through life without trouble. Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. Sooner or later, affliction will come upon you. Now, what I have to tell you is, that the only book which can fully comfort you in the time of trial, is the Bible. Learn to understand it, love it, and believe it, and you will be prepared for the day of affliction, and even for the day of death :

The best relief that mourners have,
It makes our sorrows blest ;
Our fairest hope beyond the grave,
And our eternal rest.

It is necessary for you to consider, that the God who inspired the writers of the Scripture, can make you understand what they have written. Therefore, when you read, pray. Ask the help of God's Holy Spirit, that you may not mistake the meaning

of his word. The reading of a portion of Scripture is a proper part of daily devotion; but even at other times, whenever the Bible is in your hand, lift up your heart to God in silent prayer, and beg for that light which he is so ready to give to those who ask him. And there can be no better prayer for you than that of the Psalmist: *Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.*



LETTER THIRTY-THIRD.

EARLY PIETY.

MY DEAR MARY,—I have a very important question to ask you. It is one which you must consider with all possible attention. Your greatest interests depend on it. It is this. Are you prepared for heaven?

Now, my dear young friend, do not lay this letter aside, in fear or disgust. Thoughts of God and of heaven should never be disagreeable. Do not say that you mean to be prepared at some future day, and there is time enough yet. To think so, is to yield to a dreadful temptation, and do exactly what Satan desires. If he can persuade you to put off religious consideration now, he will persuade you to do so again; and so on, time

after time, till this habit of putting off—the worst of evil habits—shall have grown upon you, and fixed itself. Why do so many thousands, in a gospel land, die unconverted? Because they have put off returning to God until it is too late. You do not intend to put it off forever: neither did they. You think a day will come when you will repent: so did they. You know much about the way of salvation: so did they. And yet they are lost! Therefore do not refuse to consider what I am saying to you.

If the blessed Saviour were now on earth, and were in your neighbourhood, and were to stand and say again, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden—take my yoke upon you,” I trust there are many who would go to him. Would *you* go to him? Children are not excluded. Christ did not forbid

them of old; he does not forbid them now. Divine Wisdom still says: "I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me." Prov. viii. 17. It is a joyful sight to God, to angels, and to saints, when children come to Christ, and thus become ready for heaven.

Why should not you be a true Christian now, at this very moment? Why should you wait longer? Is it ever too soon to be holy, to be happy? Is it ever too soon to have the best of friends, and to be united to all holy beings? Can it be too soon to return to your offended Father and be reconciled to God? You can answer these questions for yourself.

My child, we are travellers in a strange land. This world is not our home. We are only passing through it. The journey is short. All the people in the world are making their way across this plain, and all are in

one or the other road : for the roads are but two. While the great multitude are in that broad road that leads to destruction, there are some in the narrow road that leads to life. When I look at these two ways, I see that the further they go, the wider apart they are. In the beginning of the journey, where the roads are near together, and almost in sight, it is easy to go from the broad to the narrow way. As the travellers advance, fewer go from the path of destruction.

Now you are near the beginning of the pilgrimage. It will be more difficult, every day you live, to go from the beaten track. O, my little friend, go from it now ! Seize the precious moment ! God can snatch you from the broad way, even in the midst of it : but you will make sure of safety, if you step into it now Behold ! Jesus stands in it,

and spreading his bleeding hands, with tears of compassion, cries to you, and such as you,—“Now, therefore, hearken unto me, O ye children, for blessed are they that keep my ways.” Blessed be God, I can see many little ones in his train; youthful Christians who are in the narrow way of life, journeying to heaven. Beautiful sight! blessed company! O that it may be said of you: “Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her?” Luke x. 42.

Consider, that if you ought to serve Christ at all, you ought to serve him always. Consider how delightful it is to give a whole lifetime to him who died for you. Be ashamed, as well as afraid to act the ungrateful part of those who serve Satan as long as they can, in the hope of becoming religious at the last hour.

It is a great mistake to think that

you will lessen your happiness by giving your heart to God, even in childhood. You will have to give up nothing but sin; and sin works misery. Religion is true happiness, and those enjoy most of this, who begin to enjoy it earliest. Even afflictions for Christ's sake become sweet: "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake." Matt. v. 10.

It is also a great mistake to think that the mind of a child is unfit for religion. No, my dear Mary. As surely as you love your father and your mother, so surely you may love your Saviour.

True, there are deep things in religion; too deep for your youthful mind. But there are also things too deep for the wisest of mortals, in this world. And, moreover, there are a thousand things in the book of God which are fitted for the youngest as

well as the oldest. For, as Jesus said, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." Mark x. 15.

All other thoughts may well be laid aside, until this greatest concern is settled. Until you are joined to Christ, you are in continual danger. The moment you have saving faith, you are justified and delivered from the wrath of God.



LETTER THIRTY-FOURTH

PREPARATION FOR DEATH.

MY DEAR MARY,—When I wrote to you about your conversion to God, I kept back some things which I now wish to say, in a letter by itself. In particular, I beg you to consider that you may die. This is a painful subject. Without divine grace, none of us like to think of death. But if you will attend to what I am saying, you will see that it is of the greatest importance for us to think much about it, and to be prepared for it.

If all persons lived to be old, it might be safer for you to put off preparation. But do you know that by far the greater part of the human race die before they are as old as

you? Do you know that the burial-grounds are full of little graves? Do you know that this very moment children are passing into eternity?

No man can tell you what day or hour you will die. It may be this year. It may be this month. It may be this day. God knoweth. You see, therefore, as plainly as you see any thing, that it is unsafe and unwise to live in a state in which you are unprepared to meet God. When you lie down at night in sin and unbelief, you cannot be sure that you will ever awake in this world. I trust your soul already rises in prayer to God, that he would deliver you from so wretched and dangerous a state.

I hope you will immediately seek this preparation. You will then be able to look death in the face. The terror of this enemy will be gone. You will lie down in peace, knowing

that if you die, you will awake in heaven. Is not this a great blessing? Would it not add to your happiness, by curing your worst fears? Yet it is a blessing which many are enjoying at this moment: it is a blessing which may be yours. Yes, my child, once get the full assurance of hope in your soul, and you need be no more afraid of dying than of going home. Instead of thinking of death as a monster, a ghastly skeleton, that makes your blood run cold, you will think of it as the end of all pain and all sin, or as of one who opens the door which admits you in your Father's house.

What is it to be prepared for death? This is the very thing which I wish to teach you. Give me your attention. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be prepared for death. It is true, gospel faith, which unites to the Lord Jesus

Christ, that removes all danger from dying. You know it is punishment that we fear: the punishment of our sins. Now, if the sin be pardoned, there is no fear of punishment. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and your sin is pardoned; for at that moment you are "justified in the name of the Lord Jesus." "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." The moment you receive Christ as a Saviour, that moment you are received to his love. You are in no more danger than an angel in heaven. If a stroke of lightning should that instant take away your life, it would only release your soul and bear you upward to glory.

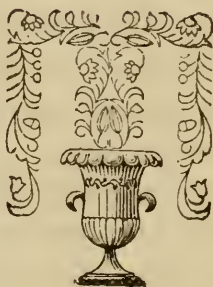
This is good news indeed, full of grace and peace to sinners, full of the love of God our Saviour. So that, though I am writing about the most dreadful of our trials, even

death itself, you see I have blessed things to tell you; and I hope you will taste the sweetness of this gospel, in your own experience.

Truly converted persons may indeed fear death, but they have no reason to do so. No pardoned soul is in danger. Death can do no harm to such a one. Unbelief and fear may keep them from thinking so; Satan may tempt them to doubt; but if they are believers they shall escape this enemy. And, sooner or later, God generally frees all his children from these fears.

Books have been written, which give an account of the happy death of many children, even younger than you. When the hour of their departure was come, they were so comforted by the Spirit of God, and had such a sight of the heavenly glory, that they could calmly bid farewell to their friends, and resign them

selves to the arms of Jesus O,
that divine grace may give you
and me the blessedness of such a
death!



LETTER THIRTY-FIFTH.

DUTY OF CHILDREN TO PIOUS PARENTS.

MY DEAR MARY,—You can never be thankful enough to God for having given you pious parents, and for having preserved their lives thus far. You have some things to answer for, therefore, more than the children of irreligious persons; and you have reasons for seeking the conversion of your soul, in addition to the reasons which such children have.

Think of the Hindoos, and the Chinese, and many such heathen people, who put their female children to death, by thousands? You might have been born among them. Or if it had been your lot to be among those who were suffered to live, you would have been taught from your

infancy to join in the abominable worship of idols. Think of the Hottentots, the Greenlanders and the Esquimaux; of whom you read at school. You might have been born among them. Your parents might have been snatched from you by the slave-trade; and you would, in any case, have grown up in ignorance, vice and idolatry. Think of the countries where children, even of parents professing Christianity, are not allowed to read the Scriptures, and are taught to bow down before images, the work of men's hands. Think of the millions of children, in Christian lands, whose parents are profane, unjust, cruel and ungodly. You might have been one of these. Think of all this, and give thanks to God, who has chosen to give you your birth in a family devoted to his fear. Ought you not to love him with all your heart? Ought you not to say

Are these thy favours, day by day,
To me above the rest?
Then let me love thee more than they,
And try to serve thee best.

Though you may die very young yourself, yet you may live to be deprived of these beloved parents. You may stand by their dying-bed, or follow their bodies to the grave. The very thought of this fills you with grief; but it is wise to consider it. Suppose this mournful event to have taken place: how will you look back on your conduct towards them? How will you wish you had treated them? What will you wish you had done to please them? Act now as you will then wish you had acted. Especially fulfil their desires for your own good. They wish you every good, but above all they long for the salvation of your soul. They have daily prayed for this. They have repeatedly offered you to God, to be

his forever. Can you bear the thought of letting them leave the world, without accomplishing this their most earnest desire?

I need not tell you what an unspeakable joy the conversion of a child gives to a loving parent. It will add to their comfort in old age; it will perhaps add to their lives. You will then be able to help them by your prayers, and to join with them in every Christian act. You will unite with them at the Lord's table, in the hope of meeting them, after a little time, in the kingdom of heaven. For when they are carried to the tomb, and you are left an orphan, you will feel a joyful hope amidst your tears, of meeting them at the right hand of Christ, at the last day. Or, if it should please God to take you away before them, which I have told you is very possible, the difference will be great between your

dying the death of the righteous and the death of the ungodly. What agony does the pious mother feel, whose child dies without hope! What comfort does she enjoy, when she knows that her beloved one has fallen asleep in Jesus? It is a duty which children owe to their parents, as well as to their God and Saviour, to become early followers of Christ.

You have the hope, that when your parents die they will go to heaven. But this will not save your soul, unless you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. And dreadful will be the separation of ungodly children from their godly parents, at the bar of God. For though this is not the great reason why you should return to God, it is one of the reasons which is very touching, and which God approves.*

* Proverbs x. 1; xv. 20; xxiii. 15, 16; xxix. 15.

LETTER THIRTY-SIXTH.

FASHIONABLE AMUSEMENTS.

MY DEAR MARY,—You cannot go entirely out of the world, and will always have young people around you who have not been brought up in the same principles as yourself. Even among your own relations there may be gay and worldly persons, who love you, but who will nevertheless lead you into evil. It will require great resolution and much grace to enable you to say *No* to their entreaties. Yet you must learn to say *No*: and now is the very time to begin. Avoid the first wrong step; for if you take that, it will be harder to avoid the rest.

The advice of your parents will be your best guide: but I wish to

help them, by giving you the same, that you may see how reasonable their wishes are. If you are wise and dutiful, you will never enter into any company or entertainment, until you have found out what they think of it.

You know that Dancing is a favourite amusement of young people. I have already written a few lines about it, but it may be well to say a little more; especially as at your age you need line upon line and precept upon precept. I have not said that it is a sin to move the body and limbs in the way that we call dancing. But I do say, and I beg you to remember, that most of the dancing-parties I have ever known have led to very great evils. They are places of sinful levity, imprudence and temptation, unfit for the children of a house where God is feared. They bring together company who meet nowhere

else, and who ought not to meet at all. They are usually continued till an hour of the night when health and good order require young persons to be in their chambers. They always lead to the spending of money, which might be laid out in a better way. And they unfit the soul for that devotion for which we ought to be always prepared, and which ought to close every day.

Look at those who are known to be most fond of balls and assemblies. Are they the wisest and holiest people? Are they those who are most punctual in attending religious meetings? Are they those who love the Bible most? Are they those who are most active in visiting the sick and the poor? Are they those whom you would send for if you were dying? No! They are the gay and thoughtless; either ungodly persons or fashionable professors of religion.

Listen to what the best Christians of every age have said about such pleasures. With one voice they have declared them to be dangerous. And it is a sign that religion is decaying, in any country, city or congregation, when the same persons go to the Lord's table and to the dance.

You have never been in a theatre ; neither have I. Though I have seen the outside of many, and passed some of them hundreds of times, I never entered the doors. It is enough for me to say, that the theatre is a place which no Christian lady should ever enter. There are good reasons for this, which your excellent mother knows, and which she will tell you may be better explained when you are older. Thousands of young men are ruined by going to the theatre, which is cause enough why no young woman should encourage them. I say the same of the circus, and of

all exhibitions of clowns, jugglers, mountebanks and comic singers. They are crowded with the lowest and vilest characters. If you should go to them, you would be amidst language such as would frighten you, and would hear the awful names of God taken in vain. The opera, though more elegant, is sometimes even more wicked ; so that I can only say, of one and all, they are Satan's snares, to lead young and old to perdition.

Your companions will tell you of the paintings, the scenery, the music, the dresses, the acting, and will assure you they are enchanting. So they are ; so is the wine which makes the drunkard ; so was the fruit which tempted Eve ; but they will injure your soul's peace ; and you daily pray, *Lead us not into temptation.*

Young persons are very inquisitive, and very curious to see and

hear what is new. You will feel a natural desire to go where others have so much entertainment. But do not give way to this desire. There are many things which you ought not to know. "But may I not go *once*? only a single time, to find out what it is?" No, my dear child, not even once. My honoured parents never allowed me to enter such places, and I have followed their wise and affectionate counsels, since I became a man. And, looking back over many years, I do not see that I have lost any thing for having never been at the theatre, the circus, or the opera.

The truth is, Christians are a peculiar people. There ought to be a great difference between them and the world. They are commanded to come out of the world, and to be separate. They ought not to follow the fashions of a world that lieth in

wickedness. They are not to go by the notions and example of light and trifling sinners, but to set such an example that these sinners may follow it and be saved. And the children of true Christians are bound to do the same. If you go where your parents think it wrong to go, you dishonour your parents. To honour your father and mother, is to do what they desire and approve. And where you see the children of professing Christians engaging in pleasures which are offensive to devout persons, you may be sure that the parents have lost their authority, that the young people themselves have lost their reverence for their parents.

There is no gloom or sourness in religion; but there is much strictness, modesty and sobriety. You may be as cheerful and happy as the thrush or the mocking-bird, and yet

go to no more plays or balls than they. And your joy will be infinitely greater than that of the gay world, if it is the joy of real religion.



LETTER THIRTY-SEVENTH.

THOUGHTS FOR THE FUTURE.

MY DEAR MARY,—Have you never sat at sunset, or in the evening twilight, and imagined yourself in situations where you had never been? You need not answer me. I was once young, and youth is very much the same with all. You also have yielded to these pleasant dreams. You thought perhaps of what would happen when you should be a little older. You even supposed yourself a young lady, free from school, free from care, with money at command, and with every one admiring you. You fancied scenes in which the heroine was always successful, always fortunate; and this heroine was always yourself. Confess to yourself, Mary

Have you not caught yourself in such day-dreams? I do not say they are very wise, but they are very common. This is the way that youth looks forward to life. All is to be bright, like a summer morning. There are to be no storms and no clouds. The birds are to sing and the flowers to bloom on every side. The paths are to be always smooth, the company always kind, and the prospects always delightful. It is as easy to fancy pleasure as pain, and the childish heart predicts only pleasure. To build such edifices gives less trouble than to make a house of cards; no wonder so many are built. The English call them castles-in-the-air, and the French *chateaux-en-Espagne*.

I am sorry to tell you, my dear, that all these castles must come down. I wish you a happy life; but the happiest life is full of troubles.

If you live a little longer, cares will thicken around you. Friends will die. Weakness and pain will come. Anxieties which you never dreamed of will visit you. Like all other human beings, you will taste the cup of suffering. And those fairy tales, which fancy and hope have whispered in your ear, will not make your trials less annoying.

But I can tell you what will do so : trust in the providence of God. Our kind Creator and Redeemer has not placed us in a world of sorrow, without furnishing us with consolation. If an angel were to show you a history of all the cares and pains which shall come upon you, it would fill you with dismay. So great a burden would crush your soul. But God, in his mercy, divides the burden into portions ; a little on one day and a little on another. And we are not to be thinking of the troubles

which are to come, but are to do our duty, and strive to bear up under those which are present.

Have faith in God, and commit all your future life to Him. He will direct you. It is impossible for us to know what a day may bring forth; but the Lord knows, and the Lord will provide. "Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass." Ps. xxxvii. 5.

It is in this way that some of the most afflicted of the human race have been supported in their trials. God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb. When his children suffer, he comes to them and helps them. Even children are the objects of his care. "Take heed," said our blessed Lord, "that ye despise not one of these little ones: for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which

is in heaven.” How many have found it true, when they have been left orphans! Just at that time of want and anguish God has shown himself ready to help them. “A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation.”* And the pious child may say with confidence, “When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up”†

You need not, therefore, tremble for what is to come. Nothing can happen to you without the permission of God. Ask him to take you by the hand and lead you. He will guide you, as the shepherd does his flock; he will carry the lambs in his bosom. He will make you to lie down in green pastures, beside the still waters. He will never leave you nor forsake you.

There was once a storm at sea,

* Ps. lxxviii. 5.

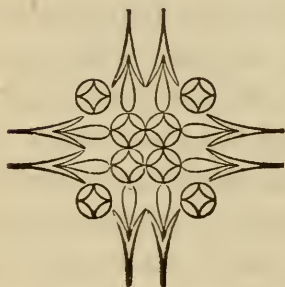
† Ps. xxvii. 10.

and the ship was in danger of being lost. Most of the passengers were in great terror ; but there was a little boy among them, who was perfectly calm. They asked him if he was not afraid. *No*, said he, *my father is at the helm*. It was a beautiful answer. Our Father is at the helm. Our heavenly Father directs the storm. It cannot hurt us, without his order. Feel this to be true, and you will be composed in the greatest dangers. Sudden or violent illness may seize you, but you will not be alarmed, because you will trust in Him who has all diseases at his command. Such is the happiness of a mind which rests on the providence of God.

We live in a time of great changes. Even now, while I write, hundreds of families which were living in wealth a few months ago, are brought down to poverty. If your parents

are still enjoying a sufficiency, it is of the Lord's mercies, and you should be thankful that it is so. But "riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle towards heaven." Prov. xviii. 5. The breaking of one bank, or a fire in one street, might make your father a poor man to-morrow. Do not trust in riches, therefore, but trust in God. Christ would have his followers to be without anxiety for the future: and he teaches them a lesson from the birds and the flowers: "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?—Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so

clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"
Matt. vi. 26, 28, 29, 30.



LETTER THIRTY-EIGHTH.

USEFULNESS.

MY DEAR MARY,—You must not grow weary of hearing me repeat, that the great rule of life is to try to make every one happy around you. You were not sent into the world to live only for yourself, but to care for others and to be useful. Sometimes it will cost you a sacrifice to do so, but you will be all the happier for making this sacrifice. It is the privilege of your sex to forget self, and scatter blessings upon others. In all countries, the stranger, the traveller and the slave turn for relief to the gentle hand of woman. And as Providence has bestowed on you a more tender heart than on us, so it has placed you in circumstances

where your pity and kindness can oftener make your fellow-creatures happy.

Begin now, my little friend, to put these rules into practice. Begin with the purpose of continuing to do good all your life. Begin with those who are nearest to you, those who live in the same house with you. It will soon be found out, by all around you, that you like to be employed in their service. If a little piece of work will oblige any one, do it at once, even if it be not your peculiar business. If a needle or a book or an article of dress is needed, be on the alert to bring it. If there is no one to go on a trifling errand, and there is no impropriety in it, offer your services. The motion will do you good, and you will acquire prompt and sprightly habits. And in every such case let your manner be cheerful and from the heart. Such conduct sheds

a sort of sunshine over a whole company. Such little services, instead of being a burden to you, will soon become your chief pleasure. An individual who pursues this course is a blessing to all the household. Her example is followed by others; and even the peevishness and moroseness of those who act otherwise will at length give way before the power of love. I can never forget the saying of a young lady, whose sweetness of temper was such as I recommend, and who often used to exclaim, when conferring such favours, *Trouble is pleasure!*

When you go abroad, do not forget your maxim. You are still to make others happy. Let it shine in your countenance; not by putting on a hypocritical smile, but by feeling the glow of real benevolence. At school or on visits, at work or play, be kind. be watchful for cases where you can

do a favour, plan what will be agreeable to others, and forget yourself. This is the secret of going pleasantly through the world; and if you act thus from Christian principles, you will enjoy all the happiness which this life can afford

The case may occur where you will have to give a fellow-creature a momentary pain, in order to do him good. If you shrink from this, it shows that your good-will is not pure. The giving of such pain, in such circumstances, is the greatest act of friendship. Do you not remember that when the surgeon set your broken arm, it gave you great pain: yet you love him for it now, and it was an act of kindness in him. If your younger brother or sister, or friends, do what is wrong, it will sometimes be your duty to reprove them; even if, in doing so, you offend them for the instant. But where there

is love in the heart, such acts will almost always be taken as favours.

Times when your friends are ill will give opportunities of much usefulness. Diseases and pains enter every family; and the female hand is that which gives the greatest relief. No man can ever be so waited on by others in illness, as most of us have been by a mother or a sister or a wife. And the wife is most useful to her husband, who has learned the arts of gentleness and kindness when she was a little girl. Do not, however, confine your good services to your own relations. When your little friend is confined to a bed of pain, ask whether it is proper for you to see her; and go, with a cheerful air, to help in nursing her, and entertaining her. Such attentions are often worth more than medicine. But especially take a pleasure in relieving the wants of the poor. I have al-

ready advised you in regard to almsgiving; but the poor need many things beside money. You may carry a bowl of warm drink to the bedside of the afflicted widow. You may go, after school, and read to her out of the Scriptures. You may stir her fire and smooth her pillow, as she lies helpless, without son or daughter to comfort her.

I say again, Live to be useful, and begin now. Do not say, I am but a little girl, there is nothing that I can do. It is not so. Though you are but a little girl, there are a thousand ways in which you can do something to make others happy; and some of these are occurring every day. A cup of cold water, given to a thirsty traveller, is something. For what does Christ say of such a favour to his disciples? "Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong

to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward."* And this reminds me of the following verses, which are worth remembering:

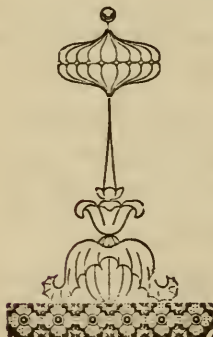
'Tis a little thing
To give a cup of water; yet its draught
Of cool refreshment, drained by fevered lips,
May give a thrill of pleasure to the frame
More exquisite than when nectareous juice
Renews the life of joy in happiest hours.
It is a little thing to speak a phrase
Of common comfort, which by daily use
Has almost lost its sense; yet on the ear
Of him who thought to die unmourned 'twill fall
Like choicest music.

There is a passage which you have often read in the New Testament, but which you should read once more, and lay it up in your heart; for it shows what our Lord Jesus Christ thinks of kindness to his afflicted people. It represents him on his throne of judgment, with all nations gathered before him. It tells us

* Mark ix. 41.

what he will say both to the righteous and the wicked. And, as you and I must meet there, may God grant that the Judge may say to us, *Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these, ye did it unto me !**

* Matt. xxv. 31—46.



LETTER THIRTY-NINTH.

ENTERTAINMENT OUT OF DOORS.

MY DEAR MARY,—The beautiful autumn has now come. It is, above all seasons, the one for healthful exercise. The woods have not yet lost their verdure. The air is cool and bracing. The earth is dry and fit for walking; and the flowers, if not so delicate as those of spring, are more numerous and more easily found. You will take advantage of these things, and will lose no chance of gaining that profit and pleasure which is to be found in walks and rides and excursions.

There is much to be learned out of doors. All nature opens its book before you. It is written by the same Almighty hand which wrote

the Law ; and it would be folly not to read in it. Now is the time to lay in a stock of health and spirits for the winter. Without strength and cheerfulness you cannot be very useful, and without enjoying the air and exercise of the country you can scarcely avoid being weak.

Now is the time to enjoy the fruits of your early rising. What is more enlivening than the freshness of a morning in September, after the days have become shorter than the nights ? You can surely rise at six ; and then you will behold one of the most glorious sights which the Creator has afforded us—the entrance of the sun on our region of the earth. Gaze and wonder, and praise Him “that made the sun to rule by day.”

If you have the happiness to be in the country at this season, on an extensive farm, your pleasures will be

much increased. Every step you take will bring you near some object of interest. The lowing herd going from milking to their meadow; the flocks of sheep nibbling the short grass over the hilly field; the chirp and carol of birds among the witch-hazel, along the little stream that runs from the milk-house; and the voice of labourers at their early work. All these are the morning sights and sounds of a farm, in autumn. Let sour folks despise such entertainments, if they know of any better; but they are just such as the word of God teaches us to remark and to love. They lead our minds to meditation and praise. David took great notice of them, perhaps even from the time when he tended his sheep in the fields of Bethlehem. He looks upward and praises the Creator: saying, "He sendeth the springs into the valleys. which run among the hills. By them

shall the fowls of heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches.—Thou makest darkness and it is night, wherein all the beasts of the field do creep forth. The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God. The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens. Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour, until the evening. O Lord! how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.”

Join your young friends and go abroad into the woods and orchards. The later peaches are not yet gone; in some of our states you may have them through all October. See the men heaping up piles of apples, and barrelling them for market. Formerly I used to see far greater piles, but for a deadly purpose. Thousands

of wagon-loads were brought together, pressed and distilled ; and thus one of the most wholesome and delicious gifts of God was turned into a destructive liquor, ruinous to soul and body. Hear the cheerful sound of the flail in yonder barn ! It is music to the farmer's ear. The rising heaps of wheat tell him of the goodness of the Creator. Listen to the strokes of the axe in the wood ! There the sturdy woodman is felling the tall hickory for the winter's fuel.

As you return, rosy-cheeked and bright-eyed, to your breakfast, perhaps the quail will whistle *Bob White* in the stubble-field, or the hare start up in your path and bound away before the dogs. These are common matters in the country, but they are full of interest to one who has been long confined to school.

I am sure you will need no persuasion when your good father invites

you to a jaunt among the hills. You will be ready long before the carriage is at the door. You will scarcely be able to make your breakfast, for agitation and hope. Then, when the brisk horses set off, the wheels will hardly go round fast enough for you. And as fences and hedges and fields slip away behind you, your little heart will seem to lose all its cares. O how joyful is the group of boys and girls on a journey of pleasure! O how many a joy reaches the parents' heart, at the enjoyments of their little ones! These are innocent, useful entertainments. You drink in health at every breath. You learn more in an hour than could be written down in a week. It is as instructive as it is agreeable, to see new places, visit water-falls, caves and other curiosities, or get a glimpse of blue mountains or of the ocean. Such sights are remembered as long

as we live, and you will love your parents more for laying up in your memory such a store of delightful recollections.

The study of natural history, in some of its branches, may be pursued to advantage at such a time. It is pleasing to children, it leads them to take notice of what is around them, it affords the finest exercise, and it teaches much of the greatness and goodness of God. In your rambles you will learn to know all the trees of the wood, and the differences of their leaves, limbs and fruit. You will gather hundreds of plants, which you may easily press and preserve in what is called an herbarium. You will get the art of knowing the birds of the country, by their plumage, their voice and their nests. You will find beautiful minerals, which may be arranged when you return home. And if you go near the

sea, there will be no end to the shells, which will give you amusement in the long winter evenings.

These are rational and innocent amusements. Those who enjoy such will never need the dice-box, the card-table, the assembly, or the play-house.



LETTER FORTIETH.

HOME.

MY DEAR MARY,—Since I last wrote to you, there has been a great change in the season. The woods are bare and leafless. The garden shows nothing but a few evergreens. Except the plump snow-bird, all the feathered tribe have disappeared. When I look out of my study-window, and survey the prospect where I lately saw green fields and orchards, I now behold a waste of snow. There is not a bare spot of earth to be found, and the icy surface reflects the sun with dazzling brilliance. You may run out in the snow for a little while; but you are soon glad to come back, glowing with colour, to the heated room.

But has winter no delights? Yes, many of them. I never knew a child who did not take pleasure in a gentle fall of snow, in sliding upon the smooth ice, in hearing the merry sleigh-bells, in seeing the boys skating on the pond, or driving their sledges down the hill. But, besides these out-of-door amusements, winter has its pleasures within. What is more pleasing than for an affectionate family to be gathered around a blazing, crackling fire! Now the delight of home is felt. Now the father raises his spectacles, calls the little ones around him, takes the infants on his knee, and keeps them all awake with stories of his childhood. He tells them of the war, when he used to tremble at the sound of British cannon; of the Indians, who used to hunt among his native mountains; of the voyages which he made to foreign countries. Now the mother

lays down her knitting, to pat some good boy on the head, to send some little sleeper to rest, or to teach a new stitch to the young marker, whose sampler is just begun. Now the happy voices join in music, or the entertaining volume is read aloud by the elder brother. The bell rings and good neighbours enter. The younger children retire. The elder ones keep silence and listen to useful and lively conversation. The salver of fruits and cakes is brought in, and the evening closes with the worship of God.

These are home-pleasures. O how sweet a word is *Home*. Children who love home and seek their pleasures there very seldom go astray. It is Christianity that has made home what it is; and without religion half its charm is absent.

No matter how dark and cold it is without, all is light and warmth with-

in. The storm may rage, and sleet rattle against the walls, but Providence shelters you in the bosom of your very best earthly friends. What cause for thankfulness is here! As you enjoy each favour, think of the blessed Saviour, through whose grace they are continued to you.

Before I was as old as you now are, I had begun to look at books of poetry. Well do I remember the old volume of Cowper's *Task* and the pictures of the lace-knitters and of poor Kate. Even then I enjoyed, as you now may, what this Christian poet says of winter evening pleasures. And a thousand times have I felt these pleasures increased by the recollection of his lines :

Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast ;
Let fall the curtains ; wheel the sofa round ;
And while the bubbling and loud hissing urn
Throws up a steamy column, and the cups,
That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each,
So let us welcome peaceful evening in.

If you learn to love such evenings, and to think the company of parents, brothers and sisters the best company in the world, you will have every day an amount of real pleasure which is unknown to those who go to operas, play-houses and crowded parties. You will not, indeed, become a fashionable young lady; but you will be wiser and happier than any one was ever made by fashion. The study of good books, and especially of God's inspired word, will lay a foundation for joys which will last all your lifetime, and which will not grow less when wealth and youth and beauty and friends have departed.

Winter pleasures are not, however, confined to the evening. They belong to morning, noon and night. In warmer seasons we go out and learn more of nature and things abroad: in winter we converse with dear

friends, with books and with ourselves. Winter is the time for study. Try to make it your entertainment. Determine to improve your mind, and to be constantly learning something that you never knew before. Study with alacrity and cheerfulness, and you will find it less injurious to your health than to fret over your books. You will learn faster and be more agreeable to all around you.

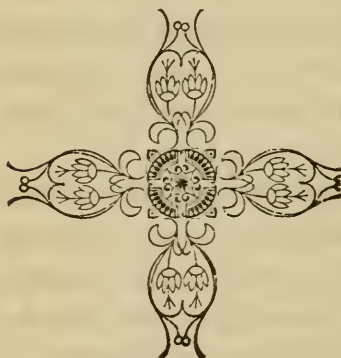
Your brothers will teach you many a healthful, innocent play, which will give you exercise in bad weather, without going out. But you must not become so delicate as to house yourself merely because it is cold. There is nothing better for a young lady than a rapid walk on the frozen ground, when the air is cold and bracing. When she returns from it she feels lighter and brighter all the rest of the day.

Make it one of your pleasures to

remember the poor in this cold season. It is the time of their greatest want and suffering. Think of the half-naked children who might be clothed with what you often waste. Your fingers cannot be better employed than in working for them. They will remember you for it, perhaps even after you have left the world. Do not forget the case of that good Christian, named Dorcas, who lived and died at Joppa. "She was full of good works and alms-deeds which she did." And when the apostle Peter approached her lifeless body, laid out in an upper chamber, it was surrounded by widows, who "stood by, weeping and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them." Be ready to join in every charitable work of this kind which may be going on in your neighbourhood.

Print it on your mind, to be al-

ways remembered, that one child may make home wretched, and that one child may do wonders towards making home happy. Every thing you do to make your father's house a house of order and peace and comfort, is so much done for your parents, your brothers and sisters, and your friends.



LETTER FORTY-FIRST.

HUMILITY AND MEEKNESS.

MY DEAR MARY,—Beware of pride. All through life you will be the better for remembering this rule. Pride is a deceitful thing, and lives and reigns in many a heart which does not suspect it. It opens the way for other passions, such as anger, revenge, envy, jealousy and malice. It produces most of the quarrels, battles and murders which fill the earth with blood.

Beware of pride. It is the thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought to think; and it generally makes us wish others to think more highly of us than we deserve. It is altogether evil; and all the ungodly world says about a decent pride, and a noble pride, is against the holy

Scriptures. The noblest being that ever was born had no pride : I mean the Lord Jesus Christ. We ought to strive to be like him ; and the more we copy his example, the happier shall we be.

If you wish to get through the world with peace of mind, be humble. That is, think little of yourself. Do your duty to the utmost of your power, and then do not be careful about the opinion of your fellow-creatures. Never do any thing merely for the purpose of being admired and praised. The world admires and praises much that is hateful to God. Too much thought about what people think of them, is a common snare of young people. It leads to mortification and pain and many tears.

When your faults are pointed out to you, I know it will give you pain. But remember, this pain is often very useful. It is like medicine,

which may be very nauseous, and yet do you good. If you think truly about yourself, you will be humble when you are reproved. You will think thus with yourself: "Am I guilty of this fault? Let me examine." And you will see more faults in yourself than any one else can see in you, and will try to correct them.

Take a low place in the world, and you will always find it the place of peace. Emulation and envy will be shut out, and you will cheerfully say, "I have more than I deserve, and I am better thought of than I deserve." Then you will be quite contented, even though others are put above you; and will have no hard thoughts if you are unnoticed.

Humility is a beautiful ornament; therefore the Bible says, "Be ye clothed with humility?" It is lovely even in the eyes of men, but still more so in the eyes of God. Your

clothes, your ornaments, your money, will tempt you to think highly of yourself. As surely as you do, you will fall into sin and trouble. The way to keep the heart humble is, to think much of God's holy law, and the perfection which it requires, and much of your own imperfection. And if you also keep your thoughts on the Lord Jesus Christ, and consider how rich he was, and how poor he became, it will do a great deal to cure your pride.

Meekness and humility are like two sisters. They almost always are in company. If a person is given to anger, you will generally find him proud. But one who is meek is always humble. The child that flies into a passion and uses harsh words, or perhaps blows, and falls out with every companion, is a very disagreeable creature. What is it that such a child needs? I can tell you in a single word: Meekness.

If you are meek, I will tell you now you may know it. You will not be soon angry. You will never use unkind language to a relation, an acquaintance, or a servant. You will never do evil to others, because they have done evil to you. Meekness is the very opposite of all this, and of every thing like spite and ill will and resentment.

It is pleasing to Christ, when young persons forgive those who injure them. Christ did so himself. Never was any one so injured as he ; but he was perfect in meekness. When he was reviled, he reviled not again. He was oppressed and he was afflicted ; yet he opened not his mouth : he was brought as a lamb to the slaughter ; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. Even when his bloodthirsty enemies were putting him to death, he prayed for them, saying, " Father, forgive them, for

they know not what they do." Whenever you feel anger or resentment rising in your bosom, think of this, and you will be ashamed of the feeling.

You will often be treated in a way that you dislike, and sometimes you will be affronted or injured. But do not hate those who offend you thus. No matter how often it happens; be meek and forgiving. The apostle Peter once came to our Saviour and asked, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" He no doubt thought this would be a great stretch of meekness. But what was Christ's answer? "I say not unto thee, until seven times, but until seventy times seven."

Remember that you are beginning life, and that you ought to begin as you mean to continue. If you begin wrong, as I often tell you, it will be hard to get right. If you follow

the ways of the world, and take their rules, you will be sure to go wrong. The people of this world are opposed to Christ and to his rules. They will tell you that when any one offends you, it is right to show some spirit, to be angry, to return evil for evil. But Christ will tell you: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you: that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?"

Other young ladies may have gold and gems, and even diamonds, and they will be proud of these; they will be praised and envied by a blind world. But if you have humility

and meekness, you will have jewels which are approved by your Father in heaven. And I cannot help quoting again what the apostle Peter says of Christian women and their dress : “ Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel ; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even *the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.*”

You are ready to say that I have given you a sermon. So I have ; but it is the last, and I bid you good night, saying again, Be humble ; be meek



LETTER FORTY-SECOND.

CONCLUSION.

MY DEAR MARY,—I have taken the pen to close our correspondence. It has been pleasant work to me. I hope it has not been disagreeable to you. But other duties call for my attention, and I must now leave you to the care of your parents and instructors. If you attend to what I have written, you will be more ready than ever to learn of those whom Providence has made your teachers.

When all these forty-two letters are put together, perhaps you will take the trouble to read them over again. You will find that I have endeavoured to instruct you about a great variety of subjects. I have written to you about your plays

and amusements, your friends and visits, your books and work, your tempers and habits, your joys and sorrows; about this world and the next. Sometimes my letters have been gay, and sometimes serious; but they have all been written with a sincere desire to do you good.

Time flies very fast, and if your life is spared you will soon be a woman. You will wonder how soon you have passed through childhood and youth. When I look back, it seems only the other day that I was about your age; and yet it was almost thirty years ago. You should, therefore, lose no time in being all that you ought to be. If you learn what is useless, waste your youth, and form evil habits, you cannot go back and correct your error. If you sow wheat, you will reap wheat: if you sow tares, you will reap tares. If you are a careless, thoughtless girl, you will probably be as careless and thoughtless

a woman. And I am sure, if you allow yourself to be an ignorant girl, you will be an ignorant woman. Now is the time; every word you say, and every thing you do, will help to make you better or worse for life.

If I should live twenty years longer, which is not likely, and in travelling through the country should come to your house, I have no doubt you would treat your old friend kindly. You would take his hat and staff, and find him an easy seat near the fire, and give his aged frame every refreshment. You would respect his gray hairs and wrinkles, and would be sorry to grieve, or offend him. Suppose I should find you very ignorant, very boisterous, and very worldly; fond of noise and idle company and finery and admiration. Suppose I should find that you had ceased to pray; that you had neglected the Scriptures; and that you

were altogether careless about the things of God. This would be dreadful. Yet such is the history of many a young lady. I should have to say, with a trembling voice,

“Twenty years ago you were my little Mary. You then had dear parents who are now in heaven. They longed and prayed for your salvation. But you neglected their counsels and their prayers. You were instructed and warned by them and by me; but you have grown worse instead of better, and my fear is that you will die as you have lived.”

It would be painful to say and hear such a speech. My prayer to God is that your case may be a very different one; that you may give yourself away to Christ now, without delay; and that whether you live or die, you may follow the footsteps of God's people.

Therefore, whatsoever things are

true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things!"

And now, my dear Mary, I trust you will believe me to be, your affectionate friend and well-wisher,





